MasterClass

ALICE WATERS

Teaches the Art of Home Cooking

A LETTER FROM ALICE WATERS

Hello, and welcome to my MasterClass. I am so honored that you are taking this journey with me.

I want to invite you into my kitchen, so I can show you how I make delicious, seasonal meals out of what I have at hand and serve them to family and friends. But these classes are about more than learning how to cook. These classes are about a philosophy of food.

There are so many books about how to cook and so many recipes in the world. More important than any recipe, though, are the ingredients that go into it. Here is how I cook: First I'm at the farmers' market, looking for fruits and vegetables that are perfectly ripe and just picked. I'm not necessarily thinking about how the ingredients will go together, and I don't know yet what I'm going to cook—I'm just responding to what I'm finding. I'm letting my senses lead me: smelling the garlic, tasting the pungency of the radishes, feeling the firmness of the apricots. And when I do finally start imagining how the ingredients relate to one another, I'm improvising—trying to capture that moment in time.

I hope to teach you about discernment. You will learn how to explore your local farmers' markets and perhaps even your own backyard, using all your

senses to find ingredients that are at their peak. You will learn how to trust your own taste, and let it guide you to what is best and most flavorful. The great secret is that when your ingredients are organically grown, are ripe, and are in season, you don't have to do much to them to make something extraordinary.

This isn't about adhering to a set of recipes or strict rules—it's about exploring and marrying flavors and ingredients as they change through the seasons. I want you to be able to cook with spontaneity, building your confidence so that you can leap away from a script.

Anyone—*anyone*—can learn to do this. I never had a formal culinary education before I opened Chez Panisse at 27. But what I loved to do—and still do!—is bring people together around a table with food that's vibrant and flavorful and alive. Because this is a story, too, about how food can change your life. I was awakened to taste when I went to France in my early twenties, and I first started to think about food differently.

What I'm teaching is not new. Our grandmothers and our grandmothers' grandmothers thought about food and eating and cooking like this. But it has been forgotten here in this country, and it is being forgotten around the world. We have been indoctrinated by a fast food culture for the past 50 years—a culture with empty values that tell us that food should always be fast, cheap, and easy, and that cooking is drudgery. Fast food culture tells us that everything should look and taste exactly the same, no matter what the season. Fast food culture wants us to believe that we don't have the time or money to sit down together and share good, homemade food.

But that is not the case. This is a class about reconnecting to those basic, earthbound human values of civilization since the beginning of time. It's about learning to feed ourselves deliciously, economically, and in harmony with nature. It's about the slow, patient joy of waiting for a tomato to sweeten on the vine. It's about the conversations we have with the farmers who care for the land, and the connections we make when our family and friends gather at the dinner table. It's about helping our children explore the incredible biodiversity of our planet, letting them dig in the soil with their own hands, growing and harvesting and cooking their own food so that they effortlessly absorb lessons of sustainability. And more than anything, it's about taste and pleasure. Because this is the greatest secret of all: when you start eating this way, you will fall in love. It is that simple.

With hopefulness,

ABOUT ALICE WATERS

Alice Waters is a chef, author, food activist, and the founder and owner of Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, California. She has been a champion of local, sustainable agriculture for over four decades. In 1995, she founded the Edible Schoolyard Project, which advocates for a free school lunch for all children and a sustainable food curriculum in every public school. She has been vice president of Slow Food International since 2002. She conceived and helped create the Yale Sustainable Food Project in 2003 and the Rome Sustainable Food Project at the American Academy in Rome in 2007. Her honors include election as a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2007; Harvard Medical School's Global Environmental Citizen Award, which she shared with Kofi Annan in 2008; and induction into the French Legion of Honor in 2010. In 2015 she was awarded the National Humanities Medal by President Obama, proving that eating is a political act and that the table is a powerful means to social justice and positive change. Her most recent honor was induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 2017. Alice is the author of 15 books, including New York Times bestsellers *The Art of Simple Food I & II*, *Edible Schoolyard: A Universal Idea*, and *Coming to My Senses: The Making of a Counterculture Cook*, a memoir.

2 THE FARMERS' MARKET / LEARNING FROM THE SOURCE

"Buy produce that is in season. It should look and feel alive. When you handle food that is alive and living, it will inspire you… I am always following the rhythms of nature and eating what Mother Nature most wants to serve us at a particular time of the year."

SUBCHAPTERS

CHAPTER REVIEW

You don't need to be a cook or own a restaurant to find delicious ingredients. Go to the farmers' market, ask questions, and try as many fruits and vegetables as you can to help develop your tastes and knowledge. Ask questions at the market about ripeness, perishability, recommended preparation, and the farmers' upcoming season of fruits and vegetables. If you can't get to a farmers' market, apply Alice's advice at your local grocery store. Ideally, you want ingredients that are both organic and local.

CONSIDER ASKING:

- Where did it come from? How far away?
- Are the animals certified organic and completely grass fed?
- Are the eggs certified organic from pastured hens?
- Is the fish sustainably caught?

For Alice, the farmers' market was the foundation of her edible education.

FOLLOW ALICE'S GUIDELINES WHEN SHOPPING:

- Engage: Ask farmers about ripeness and for help picking the best produce.
- Follow the seasons: Buy produce that is in season and has been freshly harvested. It should look and feel alive.
- Taste: Ask to taste the produce—it is the best way to evaluate it.
- Connect with your senses: Take pleasure in the beauty of food. Pick it up, taste it, smell it—it will help guide your intuition about what produce is at its peak.

Don't go to the market or store with a shopping list. Buy what looks alive and inspiring, and plan your menus when you get home.

At Chez Panisse, Alice and the chefs do not work from recipes. The chefs collaborate with farmers and growers—they cook with what the farmers send. They choose what looks the most alive and plan their menus from there. Alice does the same at home.

When you return from the market, ask yourself: What is the most perishable? As Alice unpacks and surveys her basket, she pauses to take in the beauty of the live and vibrant produce she has received from the hands of the farmers.

ALICE'S WINTER SHOPPING BASKET:

Whole chicken	Olives
Delicata squash	Raspberries
Persimmons	Fingerling potatoes
Pears	Brown rice
Carrots	Treviso chicory
Plain yogurt	Radicchio
Goat cheese	Tokyo turnips
Raw almonds	Olive oil

She sees that the raspberries (the last of the season) should be used the same day that she brings them home. The pears need a day or two to ripen, and the chicken can wait for an upcoming dinner party to be served along with the potatoes. The brown rice and Delicata squash can be cooked ahead and eaten in various dishes throughout the week. Alice starts to visualize the meals she can make with the ingredients, planning as many meals as possible with the ingredients she has.

LEARN MORE

- To learn how to use chicken bones and any trimmed parts to make stock, refer to the recipe in the Learn More section of Chapter 5: A Well-Stocked Pantry.

3 A VEGETABLE LUNCH / ROASTED, STEAMED, AND RAW

"Simplicity—as in this lunch menu—is incredibly valuable. It doesn't mean that you haven't thought something through. In fact, it's the reverse—you've thought it through so well that you can just do it simply."

SUBCHAPTERS

CHAPTER REVIEW

While planning a menu, think about the timing of each component—what can be done ahead of time, what can be done while other ingredients cook, and what needs to be finished at the last minute. In this India-inspired lunch, Alice makes the carrot salad and raita while the Delicata squash roasts, and she utilizes brown rice she cooked earlier in the week. Warming the brown rice and steaming the turnips will be the final steps.

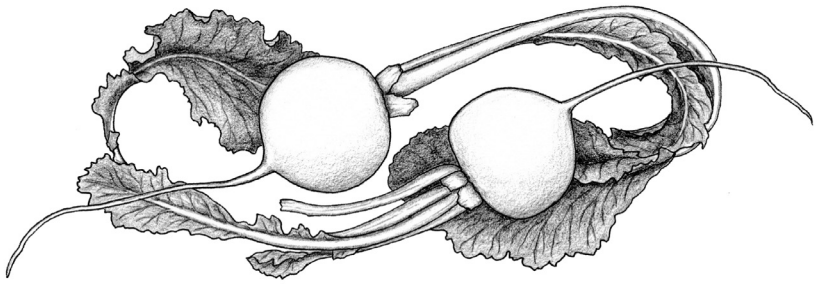
Every time you follow a recipe, you learn a technique that can be applied to other things. With these recipes, you'll practice roasting and steaming.

While the squash roasts, Alice preps the turnips with their greens; when they are young and small in size, steaming is a gentle way to cook them and preserve their natural sweetness. The turnips will continue to steam even after you pull them from the steamer, so keep that in mind to retain a little bit of crunch.

The carrots for the salad are peeled to remove the fine roots. All it takes is practice to cut the carrots into thin sticks with your knife. Season the salad with cumin salt and dress with olive oil and vinegar, tasting as you go. This salad is sturdy enough to be made ahead of time so that the vinaigrette can soak into the carrots.

With the squash in the oven, the turnips ready to steam, the salad made, next make the yogurt raita. Alice uses whole-milk plain yogurt from Straus—the first all-organic dairy in California.

Warm the brown rice, and check on the doneness of the squash. Season the rice and add the chopped cilantro at the end of cooking. When everything else is ready, steam the turnips. Think about if you'd like to plate the lunch on platters for guests to serve themselves or if you'd like to compose a specific plate. The softness of the yogurt, the crunch of the carrots, and the distinctive flavor of the turnips all play a part in contributing different textures and flavors to this lunch.



RECIPES

Roast Delicata Squash

ADAPTED FROM *Chez Panisse Vegetables,* PAGE 275

Roasting intensifies the flavors of an ingredient and can transform a vegetable that you may not care for in its raw state. Carrots, potatoes, and squash are great when simply roasted with olive oil and salt.

For the Delicata squash, cut off the ends and peel the skin—but don't bother getting into the crevices; the skin is quite edible. Cut in half lengthwise and scrape out the seeds. Peels and seeds go into your compost bin. Slice into half moons of even thickness, about 1 inch, for even cooking. Toss with olive oil, salt and pepper, and torn Kaffir lime leaves. (If you don't have Kaffir lime leaves, use sage leaves or just olive oil and salt.) Spread evenly on a baking sheet and roast at 375°F for 40 minutes, until tender and lightly browned, stirring occasionally.

VARIATION

- Other vegetables to roast: all winter squash, summer squash, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, cauliflower, fennel, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, onions, and parsnips.

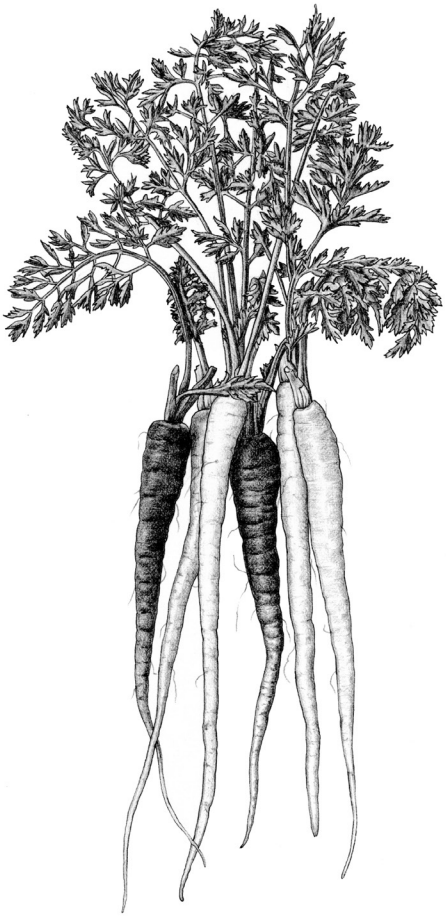
Steamed Tokyo Turnips

FROM *In the Green Kitchen,* PAGE 78

Tokyo turnips are a beautiful all-white variety that are sweet tasting and mildly spicy. When harvested young, about 1 inch in diameter, the smooth skins are thin and delicate and don't need to be peeled. At that stage, if the greens and turnips are in pristine condition, they are very good steamed whole with the greens attached. Otherwise, separate the turnips and greens, leaving an inch or so of the pale green stalks at the top of the turnips. Rinse the turnips well to remove any grit in the stalks, and leave them whole or cut into halves or quarters. Wash the greens and discard any yellow or damaged leaves. Place a steamer basket in a saucepan with a tight-fitting lid, pour in water to the depth of half an inch or so, and heat the water to boiling. Add the turnips and greens to the basket, cover the pan, and cook until just tender, 5 to 8 minutes, depending on their size. They are delicious eaten with nothing more than a little salt and butter or a drizzle of olive oil, or with a dash of vinegar or soy sauce, or squeeze of lemon juice.

VARIATION

- Other vegetables to steam: spinach, asparagus, mustard greens, corn, broccolini, and baby bok choy.



Julienned Carrot Salad with Cumin Salt

ADAPTED FROM *Chez Panisse Vegetables,* PAGE 78

4 SERVINGS

1 pound carrots
1 clove garlic, peeled
Large pinch of cumin salt
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
6 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped parsley

Peel the carrots and julienne—quick work with a Japanese mandoline. Mash the garlic clove with the cumin salt (see Chapter 5, A Well-Stocked Pantry) to a smooth paste, and mix it with the red wine vinegar. Whisk in olive oil. Taste for seasoning and add more vinegar or salt, if needed. Toss with the carrots and add the chopped parsley.

VARIATION

- Add cayenne and chopped cilantro to taste.

Yogurt Raita

ADAPTED FROM *The Art of Simple Food,* PAGE 232

MAKES ABOUT ½ CUP

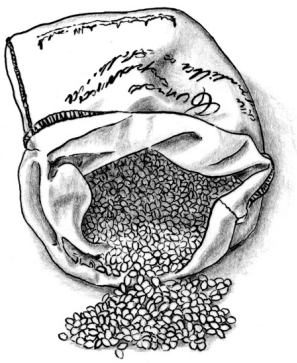
This is a version of raita, the cooling South Asian yogurt sauce, which is often made with cucumber and seasoned with cumin seed, cinnamon, and cayenne.

¾ cup organic whole-milk yogurt
1 small garlic clove, pounded to a purée
Pinch of salt
Dried chile flakes

In a small bowl, whisk together all the ingredients. Taste for salt, and adjust to taste.

VARIATIONS

- Add grated cucumber. Try different varieties of cucumber such as lemon, Armenian, or Japanese.
- Instead of dried chile flakes, add in pounded dried spices such as nigella, cumin, or coriander.
- Grate in ginger and carrot.



To Cook Brown Rice

Alice likes to cook a large amount of rice to have on hand in her refrigerator, ready to warm and season for quick meals during the week.

METHOD ONE

To make a batch of long-grain brown rice, add 1½ cups rice (amply rinsed in cold water beforehand) to 2 cups water in a heavy saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Immediately turn the heat down to low and cook until all the water is absorbed, about 30 minutes. Turn off the heat and let rest, still covered for another 10 minutes. Fluff and serve.

METHOD TWO

Fill a large pot with plenty of water, as you would for cooking dried pasta. Boil the water on high heat and season with a big pinch of salt. Add the rice and boil vigorously for 15 to 25 minutes, depending on the type of rice. Test a few grains for tenderness—once it seems cooked throughout, drain in a colander or large sieve. Immediately spread the rice in a thin layer on a large tray. Let the rice steam off and cool completely. When cool, transfer to a bowl, cover and refrigerate for up to one week.

NOTE

Both methods work for other hearty rice varieties such as forbidden rice and red rice. Method two works well for basmati and long-grain brown rice. For fluffed white rice, halve the amount of water in method one.

Brown Rice with Cilantro

Heat olive oil in a cast-iron pan and sauté cooked brown rice. Season with salt and add in chopped coriander just before serving. Taste for salt, and adjust if needed.

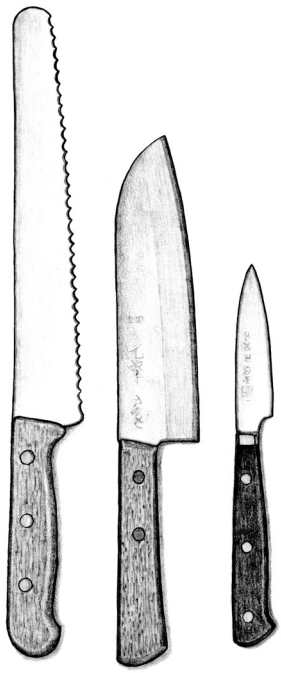
VARIATIONS

- Mix with sautéed greens and serve with an egg for breakfast or lunch.
- Add sautéed onion, minced garlic, toasted sliced almonds, and a handful of currants to warmed brown rice to make a version of jeweled rice.
- Spread a spoonful of brown rice over a sheet of lightly toasted nori, add a few slices of avocado and cucumber and a shake of sesame seeds, and roll into a cone for dipping in a soy-rice vinegar sauce.

LEARN MORE

- Try a baked version of brown rice from page 101 of *The Art of Simple Food*.
- Read more about winter squash on page 324 of *The Art of Simple Food*.

4 ALICE'S ESSENTIAL KITCHEN TOOLS



"You see all these tools here on the table and I have to say the most important tool is your hands."

SUBCHAPTERS

CHAPTER REVIEW

Alice keeps a limited amount of kitchen tools on hand and dislikes noisy appliances. One of her most-used tools is the mortar and pestle, and the Japanese version, the suribachi—inexpensive, portable, and multipurpose—is perfect for pounding garlic and making vinaigrette. A Japanese mandoline is useful for thin-slicing of vegetables for making quick shaved salads. Alice thinks of metal tongs as an extension of her hand during cooking and uses more aesthetically pleasing wooden tongs for serving. The tools that you are using every day can be both beautiful and useful.

Other essential tools are knives, wooden spoons, a rolling pin, a spider sieve for scooping things out of hot water or oil, and whisks of different sizes—Alice loves the tiny one she uses to make vinaigrettes and aïoli. You only need a few good, sharp knives to make great meals at home: a paring knife, a bread knife or serrated knife, and a chef's knife.

A steaming basket and a few sheet pans are perfect for steaming and roasting vegetables. Alice has a variety of cast-iron pans, a stockpot, and a few all-purpose sauté pans and saucepans—some of which are earthenware dishes made to go in the oven but also beautiful enough to go straight to the table. (You can find cast-iron pans in the thrift stores and flea markets and bring them back to life.) Most of Alice's mixing bowls are from secondhand stores or her travels and she likes to think of the journey she was on whenever she uses a bowl associated with a certain memory.

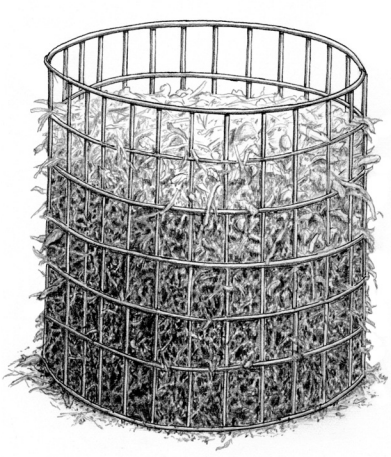
Alice always has a compost bucket in the kitchen, and she encourages everyone to do the same. Any organic scraps that result from your cooking that are not fish or meat can go into the bucket. Alice empties the bucket into the compost pile in the backyard, adding layers of straw, soil, or water as necessary. It is a simple but vital step in recycling nutrients back into the soil and taking care of the planet.

Your hands are your most important tool. They can check for temperature and ripeness, tear bread and snap apart cauliflower florets, toss a salad with just the right amount of dressing, and strip herbs from their stems. You get a lot of information about your cooking and your ingredientes just from engaging in a more tactile and sensory way.

ALICE'S ESSENTIAL KITCHEN TOOLS

COOKING EQUIPMENT:

Knives and cutting board
Compost bucket
Cast-iron skillets: 6, 10, and 12 inches
12-inch stainless steel–lined sauté pan
1-quart saucepan
2- to 3-quart stainless steel-lined saucepan with lid
3- to 4-gallon stockpot
4- to 6-quart ovenproof pot with lid
Baking sheets and roasting pan
Earthenware and gratin dishes of various sizes
Steamer basket and sieves
Spider sieve
Salad spinner and colander
Bowls of various sizes
Japanese mandoline
Mortars and pestles of various sizes
Rolling pin, and tart and pie pans
A selection of small tools: wooden spoons, spatulas, whisks, tongs, grater, pepper grinder, vegetable peeler, measuring cups and spoons, and corkscrew



Building a Compost Pile

FROM *The Art of Simple Food II,* PAGES 364–366

Making a compost pile is a straightforward and enjoyable process; even if there is a hiccup here or there, in the end, you will have compost. The pile is built of alternating layers of brown and green elements, just as if you were making a large layer cake. A well-made compost pile is odorless and discreet.

Locate your pile out of direct sunlight; a shady area will help keep the pile moist. A compost bin is not necessary, especially if you live in a mild climate and have lots of room. You can make a bin or buy one. Look online for plans and descriptions and check your local municipalities, as many subsidize the cost of first-time bin purchases.

Spread a 4-inch layer of brown material (straw, dried grass clippings) over the bottom of a compost bin or the bottom of the pile location.

Moisten with water (a fine spray from the hose or a watering can). Use enough water on the layer to make it damp, but not soggy or dripping.

Spread on top a 2-inch layer of green material (vegetable scraps, garden trimmings, grass clippings). Don't worry if you don't have enough greens; the layer can be made incrementally.

Spread the unfinished layer with straw or other browns to keep flies away. Push aside the brown when adding more greens. When the layer is complete, cover with a 4-inch layer of brown material.

Moisten as above and keep building the pile, alternating layers just as if you were making a large layer cake, until the bin is filled or the pile is a few feet high. If desired, sprinkle the green layers with rock dust or other minerals.

After three months in warm weather, or six months in cold, turn the layers over into a second bin or pile, until you reach compost that has matured. (The compost on the bottom will be mature first.) Compost is ready and mature when none of its ingredients are recognizable and it is dark brown and easily crumbled. Sift the mature compost before adding it to the garden, returning any large pieces back into the pile, and continue the ongoing process of layering, turning, and making more compost.

NOTES

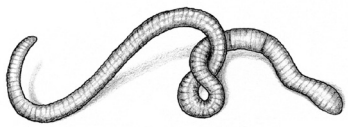
- If you are making compost for the first time, or would like to rejuvenate the microbial life of your soil, throw in a handful or two of locally occurring compost (take a bag with you on a walk in the woods or in a park and gather a handful of soil from under a log, a forest floor, or alongside a creek); or add compost from a neighbor's bin to introduce some new soil microbes.
- Add as many diverse ingredients to your pile as possible. This will give the compost a fuller spectrum of nutrients and microbes for the garden. Green ingredient options include organic coffee grounds from your local café; spent vegetables from the farmers' market or other organic food shops; and small amounts of litter from organically fed hamsters, guinea pigs, or chickens.
- Do not add weeds that have seeds (they will germinate and take over your garden); diseased plants; grass (or anything else) that has been treated with herbicide; manure from carnivores (dogs, cats, people); or meat and dairy products (which will compost, but also attract vermin).
- Compost should never smell bad. Smelliness is a sign of lack of oxygen due to compaction, too much green material, or too much moisture. To correct this problem, turn the pile to aerate it, and if it is too moist, add layers of brown material.
- Grass clippings can get matted together and become anaerobic and stinky. Let them dry for a day or two and add them to the pile in thin layers, or premix them with other brown materials before adding to the pile.
- If the compost does not seem to be breaking down, it is probably too dry. Turn it, moistening the layers as you go.
- To speed up the composting process, scatter compost from a previous pile or a purchased bag of live compost every layer or so to inoculate your pile with beneficial microorganisms.
- Use a long sturdy stick or metal pole (rebar) to poke holes in the pile for added aeration. Plunge the stick all the way to the bottom of the pile at intervals of about 5 inches. Aerate the pile again after turning.
- Only use mature compost in a growing garden; unfinished compost will continue to decompose, but it will tie up the nutrients in the soil. Coarse, unfinished compost can be used in the fall as mulch over beds that are wintering over.

VARIATIONS

- If you have a lot of material to compost, you can build the pile all at once. Make the pile a minimum of 3 feet square. Dampen the layers of green and brown evenly. The pile will become quite hot (up to 160°F) within a few days. (The heat is the product of the feeding activities of bacteria.) Once the heat begins to subside, turn the pile to aerate it and it will heat up again. Turn again, until the pile no longer heats up. The compost will usually be ready in about six weeks to three months.
- Leaves may be composted separately into leaf mold. Leaf mold is a marvelous aid for soil structure and water and air retention. Carbon-eating microbes love it. It is also a great ingredient for homemade potting soil and makes fantastic mulch. (Leaf mold is not high in nutrients, so regular compost should be added to soil and containers, too.) A large pile of leaves is needed to create the right environment for composting—4 to 5 feet square is recommended. Make the pile in layers, moistening them as you go. Let sit for six months to two years. To speed up the process run over the leaves a few times with a lawn mower before piling them up and turn the pile every few months, wetting the layers as needed. Leaf mold is ready when it is dark brown, soft, and crumbly.

LEARN MORE

- Read through the extended equipment list in *The Art of Simple Food*, pages 22–27.
- Read about worm composting in *The Art of Simple Food II*, pages 366–368.



5 A WELL-STOCKED PANTRY

"How I stock my pantry allows me to cook in the way that I do—simply and yet with great depth of flavor and spontaneity."

SUBCHAPTERS

CHAPTER REVIEW

Alice's pantry has more than shelf-stable ingredients—although those are a large part—and includes things in the freezer, ready-to-go ingredients in the fridge, and perishable staples like garlic and herbs.

PERISHABLE STAPLES:

Garlic	Chicken stock
Olives	Butter
Fresh herbs	Yogurt
Eggs	Carrots
Lemons	Onions
Mustard	Celery
Cheese	Pickles
Nuts	Sauerkraut

Olive oil is an absolute essential in the pantry. It is the basis for the cooking at Chez Panisse and in Alice's home kitchen. To choose the best olive oil, you have to taste. The color of each oil will give you some hints but only taste will tell you whether the olive oil is fruity, buttery, rich, green, smooth, or peppery. An olive oil with an off flavor will have an oxidized rancid character. Alice recommends a lighter oil for cooking and a richer oil for sauces and finishing. Consider having an annual tasting party after the new oils come out in the fall. It will cut down on the cost when you taste in a group and it will help you learn together how to articulate what you're tasting. Alice likes peppery, Tuscan oils but encourages you to find the oils that you like best.

Shop for olive oil at stores where the stock does not linger on the shelves for too long. Some specialty food stores offer olive oil in bulk so you can bring your own bottle and refill. That's an indicator that they have a large turnover of olive oil, and you can taste it on the spot. For stores without a bulk supply, buy a small bottle of olive oil to test for freshness before committing to a large amount. Check for the calendar year printed on the bottle and use within one year of bottling. Look for organic labeling (*biologico* in Italian) or confirm the farming practices with the person you're buying from. Although extra virgin olive oil is pricey, the flavor that it adds to a dish makes it well worth the investment.

Good quality vinegar is often found next to olive oil at the grocery store. Alice prefers red wine vinegar for salads. She also keeps champagne, sherry, balsamic, apple cider, and rice wine vinegars in her pantry. If you try a vinaigrette you love, ask about the specific olive oil and vinegar used in the recipe whether you're in a friend's home kitchen or at a restaurant.

A WELL-STOCKED PANTRY

Alice likes to use spice blends grouped by a particular country and cuisine because of the way they can marry dishes together. She uses Mexican spices like dried chipotle chile in soup, dried ancho chile with lamb or to flavor beans, and toasted cumin seed to make a cumin finishing salt. The warm spices of Morocco—cumin, coriander, turmeric, and cayenne—are key to meat and vegetable braises and tagines. Alice uses saffron from India in fish soups and rice. The sweet spices she uses most often are cinnamon bark, vanilla beans, nutmeg, cloves, and sweet anise seed.

For the best flavor, buy spices whole and toast and grind them yourself. Look for organic labeling and buy in small amounts so that you don't have large amounts sitting unused and losing pungency. Store spices in airtight containers. For salt, look for pure sea salt and keep both a coarse and finer grind on hand. Coarse salt is for seasoning boiling water and brines and fine salt is for seasoning ingredients and finishing dishes. Sea salt contains trace minerals that give it a stronger, saltier, more complex flavor.

The three rices that Alice uses most are Arborio rice from Italy, long-grain brown rice from California, and basmati rice from India. Arborio rice—short-grain with a starchy coating—is used to make a risotto that slowly absorbs liquid, resulting in a creamy-saucy texture. It is a great way to showcase a flavorful stock. Brown rice was the grain that inspired Alice to start incorporating whole grains in her cooking. The long-grain brown rice she uses from Massa Organics is nutty and flavorful—far from the dense health food store brown rice she remembers from college days. Alice first had basmati rice—an aromatic long-grain white rice common in Indian cooking—with Madhur Jaffrey who first boiled the rice and then finished it in the oven with butter and saffron.

Beans are a staple in every part of the world. Alice often cooks a pot of beans on the fire and uses them throughout the week, baking them as a gratin, mixing a variety of beans with vinaigrette for a bean salad, or adding them to pasta for a dish of pasta e fagioli. Cooking with dried beans instead of canned yields a far better flavor and texture and is less expensive. Soak the beans the night before and it will take little effort to have cooked beans, such as chickpeas that can easily be made into a hummus.

There is now a huge variety of dried pastas available at the grocery store. Pasta made of farro, quinoa pastas, egg pastas with yellow noodles from the yolks, and semolina. When Alice and her daughter, Fanny, come home from a trip, the first thing they reach for in the pantry is dried pasta. They cook it with olive oil, garlic, anchovy, and parsley, and call it "coming home pasta"—once they've had it, they feel like they are finally home.

RECIPES

Garlic Vinaigrette

ADAPTED FROM *In the Green Kitchen,* PAGE 13

4 SERVINGS

It's essential to learn how to make vinaigrette and you can adapt the recipe to your liking—Alice likes hers with garlic. In France it is common to serve the salad at the end of the meal as a bright finish before the dessert course. Alice sometimes does this after a rich or heavy meal to bring a refreshing component in at the end. She likes a slightly higher amount of vinegar in her vinaigrette. Taste as you go to determine the ratio you prefer.

1 small garlic clove
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
Salt
Fresh-ground black pepper
3 to 4 tablespoons olive oil

Put a peeled garlic clove and 2 big pinches of salt in a mortar and pestle and pound into a very smooth paste. The suribachi is perfect to pound the garlic into a paste that will almost disappear into the dressing. Add the vinegar, grind in some black pepper, and taste for the balance of salt and vinegar. Allow to macerate for 10 to 15 minutes, and whisk in olive oil. Taste the dressing with a leaf of lettuce. It should taste bright and lively without being too acidic or too oily; adjust the salt, vinegar, or oil as needed.

VARIATIONS

- In place of the garlic, add a little diced shallot to the vinegar.
- White wine vinegar, sherry vinegar, a combination of vinegars, or lemon juice can replace some or all of the red wine vinegar.
- Whisk in a little mustard before you start adding the oil.
- Heavy cream or crème fraîche can replace some or all of the olive oil.
- Chop some fresh herbs and stir them into the finished vinaigrette.
- Use lemon juice instead of vinegar, and add a chopped salted anchovy.

Cumin Salt

ADAPTED FROM *My Pantry,* PAGE 18

MAKES ABOUT 2 TABLESPOONS

Cumin is one of the spices Alice uses most; it is much more versatile than people imagine. Alice uses it so often, in fact, that it is always among the flavorings on the spice tray she keeps next to her stove. She adds it to sautéed greens and lentils, and uses it to season halved hard-boiled eggs for a quick savory breakfast.

2 tablespoons cumin seeds
1 teaspoon sea salt

Toasting a spice can deepen its flavor. First toast the seeds in a hot cast-iron skillet and shake the pan to move the seeds around for even toasting. You can hear the seeds pop and sizzle as the heat activates the aromas and oils. Once they've browned a bit, transfer the seeds to a mortar and pestle and pound it with the salt until coarsely ground.

Mexican Tortilla Soup

ADAPTED FROM *The Art of Simple Food,* PAGE 252

MAKES 2 QUARTS: 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

This is a classic Mexican soup that is brought to the table with a variety of serve-yourself garnishes.

1½ quarts chicken broth
1 chicken breast half (with skin and bones for best flavor)
½ cup peanut or vegetable oil
4 corn tortillas, cut into ½-inch strips
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 Anaheim green pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
½ medium yellow onion, thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
Salt
2 tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and diced; or 3 small canned whole tomatoes, diced (juice included)
1 dried chipotle chile, seeds removed
½ teaspoon dried oregano

FOR GARNISH:

½ cup chopped cilantro

6 lime wedges
About 4 ounces crumbled queso fresco or grated Monterey Jack cheese
½ cup peeled and shredded jicama
½ cup julienned radish
1 cubed avocado

Heat the chicken broth to a simmer, then add the half chicken breast. Cook at a bare simmer until the chicken is done, about 20 minutes. Turn off the heat, transfer the breast to a plate, and let cool. Remove and discard the skin and bones and shred the meat. Pour the peanut or vegetable oil into an 8-inch heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high heat, and then add the tortillas. Fry in small batches until golden brown and crispy. Drain on paper towels and season with salt.

In a large heavy pot, heat the olive oil and add the green pepper, onion, garlic, and salt. Cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Pour in the hot broth, then add the omatoes, chipotle chile, and additional salt. Bring to a boil and then turn down to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes. Add the shredded chicken meat and oregano and heat through, but do not boil. Taste for salt and adjust as needed.

Serve the soup with the crispy tortilla strips and little bowls of the garnishes.

Moroccan-Style Braised Vegetables

FROM *In the Green Kitchen,* PAGE 111

6 SERVINGS

This is a spicy and aromatic stew of chickpeas and tender vegetables. It is delicious served with pita bread, buttered couscous or saffron rice, and spicy harissa sauce.

FOR THE CHICKPEAS:
½ pound (1 cup) dried chickpeas, picked over and soaked overnight
1 small onion, peeled and halved
½ cinnamon stick
1 small dried red chile
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt

Drain the chickpeas, put them in a medium pot, and add water to cover by 1½ inches. Add the onion, cinnamon stick, chile, olive oil, and a generous pinch of salt. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to maintain a simmer, and cook gently until the chickpeas are tender, about 45 minutes. Taste for salt. Remove from the heat and allow the chickpeas to cool in the cooking liquid.

FOR THE BRAISED VEGETABLES:

Salt
½ pound carrots
1 pound baby turnips
1½ pounds butternut squash
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon coriander seeds
A pinch of saffron threads
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 large onion, peeled and diced
2 celery stalks, diced
One 14-ounce can whole tomatoes
2 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
1 teaspoon finely grated fresh ginger

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and season with a generous amount of salt. Peel and halve the carrots and cut into halves or quarters. Cook the carrots and turnips in separate batches until just tender, about 5 minutes. Spread the vegetables on a baking sheet to cool at room temperature.

Peel and seed the squash, and cut into 1-inch chunks. Put the squash on a baking sheet, drizzle with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil, and toss to coat evenly. Spread the squash out to an even layer, season with salt, and roast in the oven until tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Set aside at room temperature.

Lightly toast the cumin seeds, coriander seeds, and saffron, and grind to a powder with a mortar and pestle or in a spice grinder. Add the turmeric and cayenne, and stir to combine.

Warm a large straight-sided skillet over medium heat. Add the remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil, followed by the onion, celery, and a pinch of salt. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Drain the tomatoes and cut into ¼-inch dice. Add the tomatoes to the skillet and cook for 2 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Add the spices, garlic, and ginger, and cook for 2 minutes more. Add the chickpeas and the cooking liquid, and bring to a simmer. Add the squash, carrots, and turnips. At this point, there should be a nice amount of broth in the pan—like a chunky soup. If not, add water as necessary. Taste for salt, and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve with buttered couscous or saffron rice, and pass a bowl of harissa at the table.

TO MAKE HARISSA:

Toast 5 dried ancho chiles on a hot griddle until puffed and fragrant. Put the chiles in a bowl, cover with boiling water, soak for 20 minutes, and drain. Roast, peel, and seed 1 large red bell pepper. In a blender or food processor, purée the drained chiles and peeled pepper with 4 peeled garlic cloves, ¾ cup olive oil, 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar, and salt to taste. Thin with water if desired.

Spicy Indian Cauliflower Stems

FROM *The Art of Simple Food II,* PAGES 236–237

4 SERVINGS

My office is filled with wonderful interns and assistants who make it possible for me to accomplish all that I do. Although they are not all cooks, food is a frequent topic of their conversation. When we talked about this book, many ideas were tossed around, including this recipe, a northern Indian way of cooking the core and stem of cauliflower—parts that I used to relegate to the compost bucket. Not anymore!

2 large cauliflower cores and stems
½ teaspoon black peppercorns
Seeds from 1 brown cardamom pod (badi elaichi)
One 2-inch piece cassia
3 cloves
2 teaspoons olive, coconut, or vegetable oil
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon dried mango powder (amchoor)
Salt

Combine the peppercorns, seeds from the cardamom pod, cassia, and cloves in a heavy-bottomed skillet. Place the pan over medium-high heat and cook, tossing the spices in the pan now and then, until fragrant. Take care not to burn the spices. Let cool and grind to a powder in a spice grinder or using a mortar and pestle. Peel the outer woody parts from the cauliflower cores and stems and cut into large dice or into thick slices. Put a skillet large enough to accommodate the stems over medium-high heat. When hot, add the oil and cumin seeds. Cook until the cumin starts to crackle and then add the stems. Season with salt. Toss, and turn down the heat to low. Cover tightly and cook

until tender. Check and stir, letting all the condensation on the bottom of the lid run back into the pan. If the cauliflower is starting to brown too quickly, turn down the heat (or use a flame tamer). As the cauliflower turns tender, season with the ground spice mixture and the dried mango powder. Stir to coat evenly. When the cauliflower is tender, taste for salt, and adjust as needed.

VARIATIONS

- Substitute kohlrabi or broccoli stems for the cauliflower stems.
- If mango powder is unavailable, finish with the juice of a half lemon.

Spiced Pears

FROM *Chez Panisse Fruit,* PAGE 226

6 SERVINGS

This is a recipe reproduced from memory after one of our chefs visited a three-star restaurant in France. Unfortunately, no one seems to remember which chef or which restaurant.

3 cups (one bottle) dry white wine
1½ cups sugar
1 cup water
Zest and juice of 1 lemon
½ vanilla bean, split in half lengthwise
6 firm, not-quite-ripe Bosc, Bartlett, or d'Anjou pears, quartered, cored, and peeled
1 cup heavy cream
Two 3-inch pieces cinnamon stick
10 cloves
1 star anise
1 teaspoon peppercorns
¼ cup honey
4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter

Pour the wine, sugar, and water into a medium-size saucepan and stir over low heat until the sugar is dissolved. Remove the lemon zest with a zester (the kind with tiny holes) or peel off strips of zest with a swivel-bladed vegetable peeler and cut into a fine julienne. Add the zest and lemon juice to the syrup, scrape the vanilla bean seeds into it, and add the bean pieces. Add the pears and simmer gently until they are tender and cooked through, about 30 minutes. Remove the

pears and set aside. Over high heat reduce the poaching liquid to about 1 cup of thick syrup. Add the cream, lower the heat, and simmer for 5 minutes. Strain the sauce and keep it warm.

Crush the cinnamon sticks, cloves, star anise, and peppercorns together with a mortar and pestle. The spices should be coarsely ground until the pieces are small enough to be edible. Melt the honey and butter together in a large sauté pan. Add the pear pieces, sprinkle with the spice mixture, and sauté over high heat until the pears are browned and the spices are stuck to them. Arrange 3 or 4 pieces of pear on each plate and drizzle with the pear sauce. Serve warm, with a scoop of vanilla ice cream alongside.

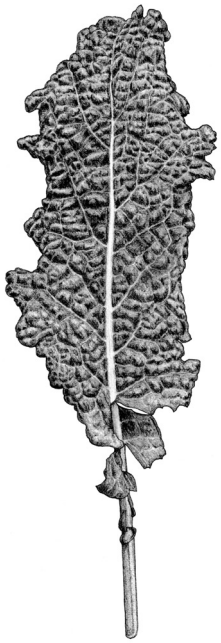
Coming Home Pasta

Toss hot spaghetti with a heap of minced garlic sautéed gently (not browned) in olive oil, dried chile flakes, a salted anchovy or two, a handful of chopped parsley, and salt to taste. Enjoy with a glass of red wine.

LEARN MORE

- If you want to make your own red wine vinegar, see page 22 of *My Pantry*.
- Deepen your understanding of the process of cooking dried beans by reading pages 78–79 of *The Art of Simple Food* and then make a pot of beans for the week.

6 COOKING FOR YOUR PANTRY / ALICE'S STAPLES



"Alongside high-quality staples from the market, I also like to make things for the pantry myself."

SUBCHAPTERS

A Versatile Brine for Quick Pickles

Garlic Sautéed Greens to Stock Your Fridge

A No-Cook Dessert From Your Pantry

Oat Pancakes for Now and Later

CHAPTER REVIEW

The pantry is not only made of dry goods, cans, and jars. Alice considers ready-to-go items prepared in advance to be a pantry element. Often on a farmer's market day, when there is time, she will make a few preparations to stock the refrigerator with delicious things that can be additions to or the basis of quick meals during the busy week ahead.

Alice's quick pickles start with farmers' market vegetables and a brine of vinegar, water, salt, sugar, herbs, and spices. They can be kept in the refrigerator for a month. Whichever vegetables you choose, cut them into uniform sizes for even pickling. Use champagne vinegar for its neutral flavor and ability to marry into the brine. The spice mixture can be adjusted to your tastes with variations such as adding turmeric for its bright orange color.

Garlic sautéed greens go with almost everything; refrigerator quick pickles will boost a grilled cheese sandwich lunch; pancake batter can last a week in the fridge at the ready for a nutritious breakfast; and whole grains can be made in one large batch and heated up for meals throughout the week. During Alice's time in Italy she became accustomed to having sautéed greens along with most meals. At home, she sautés greens like kale and frisée with olive oil and a few cloves of garlic. If the greens are larger, they can be chopped or even blanched before sautéing. The garlic should be fine-chopped so that it melts into the greens. Alice also likes to make a version she learned from her friend from India with ginger and chiles added to the garlic.

Honey is another versatile pantry staple. Alice is gifted with honey from all over the world and each one has the unique flavor of the flowers of the region, such as an especially aromatic honey from Portugal and a chestnut honey from northern Italy with an almost bitter finish. Top a mild ricotta cheese with an interesting honey and toasted nuts and you have a quick and elegant dessert from your pantry.

Oat pancakes are whole-grain, simple to make, and enticing to children especially if served with a sweetened strawberry compote or other berry or fruit compote or sauce—a great way to use overripe fruit. The pancakes are cooked in a cast-iron pan, which Alice uses to cook just about everything. They are indestructible but take some care. A cast-iron pan will behave like a non-stick pan if it is well-seasoned and cared for. Always place a just cleaned cast-iron pan on the flame to dry and rub in oil to maintain the seasoning.

RECIPES

Quick Pickling Brine

ADAPTED FROM *My Pantry,* PAGE 57

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS

Alice uses this brine to pickle little cauliflower florets, sliced carrots, quartered pearl or cipolline onions, halved okra pods, small turnips cut into wedges (with some stem attached), whole green beans, whole chiles, small cubes of celery, fennel, and winter squash—and more. Sometimes she just slices red onions very thin and pours the boiling brine over them. (This also works well for radishes, zucchini, and cucumbers.) By the time they cool they will have cooked just enough and are delicious served with smoked fish and new potatoes or garnishing a smoked salmon toast.

1 cup white wine vinegar
1½ cups water
2½ tablespoons sugar
½ bay leaf
4 thyme sprigs
A pinch of dried chile flakes
½ teaspoon coriander seeds
2 whole cloves
4 cloves garlic, halved
1 tablespoon sea salt

Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Add small or chopped vegetables to the brine, cooking each type of vegetable separately and removing them when they are cooked but still a little crisp. Remove the vegetables with a slotted spoon and set them aside to cool to room temperature. Once all the vegetables are cooked and cooled, allow the brine to cool as well. Stir the vegetables together gently, then transfer to jars or other covered containers, cover with the cooled pickle brine, and refrigerate. You can keep this basic brine in your refrigerator and reheat it to make fresh pickles when you are inspired by a trip to the farmers' market. The brine can be used several times for pickling.

VARIATION

- Feel free to alter the ingredients of the brine. Try using red instead of white vinegar, or adding a bit of saffron, turmeric, another kind of dried chile than chile flakes, or slices of fresh jalapeño.

Broccoli Rabe with Garlic and Hot Pepper

ADAPTED FROM *The Art of Simple Food,* PAGE 311

This is one of my favorite greens. It has an assertive flavor that is bitter, nutty, sweet, and green. The stems have a great texture that's both juicy and chewy. It calls out for garlic and strong flavorings—hot pepper, anchovies, and vinegar.

2 bunches of broccoli rabe (about 1¼ pounds)
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 dried cayenne pepper, sliced coarse, or a pinch of dried chile flakes
3 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
Salt

Stem the broccoli rabe, cut off and discard any woody parts of the stems. Cut the rest of the stems into ½-inch-long pieces. Slice the leafy parts into 1-inch ribbons. Wash the greens in cold water and drain. Add 3 tablespoons olive oil to a wide sauté pan over medium heat. When hot, add the pepper or chile flakes and the garlic. Stir once, then quickly toss in the broccoli rabe and season with salt. If all the broccoli rabe won't fit in the pan, wait until some of it is wilted before adding the rest. The residual water from washing the greens should be enough to cook them, but if the pan gets too dry and starts to sizzle, add more water. The toughness of broccoli rabe varies wildly. Cooking it until tender can take anywhere from 4 to 12 minutes. Keep checking for tenderness and seasoning. Just before serving stir in 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil.

VARIATION

- Use the same method to cook other leafy greens: kale, rapini, escarole, chard, dandelion, mustard greens, and chicories.

Ricotta, Honey, and Hazelnut Dessert

When Alice has honey and hazelnuts on hand, she makes a dessert of ricotta topped with warmed honey and freshly toasted and chopped hazelnuts. Although it is a simple dessert, it uses the absolute best version of each ingredient—the most delicious ricotta, freshly roasted hazelnuts, and a unique honey. It is an opportunity to showcase a special or unusual honey and to appreciate the flavor of the honey—not just use it as a sweetener.

To plate, cut a wedge of your tender ricotta and layer a spoonful of just warmed honey on top. Finish with a sprinkle of toasted chopped hazelnuts.

Ricotta

FROM *My Pantry,* PAGE 109

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS

Ricotta cheese is one of the few cheeses that you make at home that does not need enzymes, only milk, hot water, vinegar and salt. Some recipes for ricotta use lemon juice and some citric acid, but I like to use distilled vinegar. It contributes the least flavor to the cheese and produces a cheese that tastes the most like fresh milk.

4 cups organic whole milk (not ultra-pasteurized)
1½ tablespoons distilled white vinegar
¾ teaspoon sea salt

Heat the milk in a heavy-bottomed nonreactive pot over medium heat until the temperature reaches 190°F. Stir the milk now and then to keep it from scorching. Pour in the vinegar, stir briefly, and bring the temperature back up to 190°F. The milk should coagulate and separate into white curds and lighter colored whey. If this does not happen, add a bit more vinegar, ½ teaspoon at a time. Turn off the heat and let sit undisturbed for 10 minutes.

Place a sieve over a large bowl and line with a few layers of cheesecloth or a single layer of butter muslin. Gently ladle the curds from the pot into the cloth-lined sieve with a slotted spoon. Slowly stir in the salt. Drain for a few minutes, or longer if you prefer a firmer ricotta. Taste a little to judge the texture. Eat right away or refrigerate for up to 4 days.

Oat Pancakes

FROM *My Pantry,* PAGE 78

MAKES 8 PANCAKES (3 TO 4 INCHES IN DIAMETER)

These pancakes can go savory or sweet. Serve with a poached egg, a dollop of yogurt or cottage cheese, a fruit compote or berry sauce, slices of fruit, or a drizzle of honey.

1 cup rolled oats
¾ cup milk or almond milk
1 large egg
3 tablespoons ghee, coconut oil, or butter (or a combination), melted
½ teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon baking powder

Put the oats in a blender or food processor and blend to a fine powder (this shouldn't take more than 20 or 30 seconds). You will have about ¾ cup oat flour.

Beat the milk and egg together with a fork in a medium bowl. Stir in the melted butter or oils—Alice likes a mix of ghee and coconut oil, which lends both buttery and coconutty flavor to the pancakes. Add the oat flour, salt, baking soda, and baking powder and stir until just combined. Let the batter sit for 10 minutes to thicken.

Heat a skillet over medium-high heat. Grease lightly with oil or butter and spoon in the batter, about a quarter cup per pancake. Cook the pancakes until a few bubbles on top have broken, then flip them over and cook until golden on both sides.

LEARN MORE

- If you'd like to cook additional staples for your pantry, try the following recipes from *My Pantry*.

Chicken Stock

FROM *My Pantry,* PAGES 100–101

MAKES ABOUT 5 QUARTS

About 4 pounds meaty chicken parts or 1 whole chicken
1 carrot, peeled
1 onion, peeled and halved
1 celery stalk
1 head garlic, halved
1 leek, halved and rinsed
1 teaspoon sea salt
A few black peppercorns
A few parsley sprigs
A few thyme sprigs
1 or 2 bay leaves

Put the chicken in a large pot and add 1½ gallons cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then lower the heat so that the broth is barely simmering, with bubbles just breaking the surface. Skim off the foam that rises to the top, but leave some of the fat as it adds lots of flavor to the stock and can be removed later. For a nice clear stock, don't let it boil again, or the fat and the liquid may emulsify, turning the stock cloudy and greasy. After skimming, add the vegetables, salt, peppercorns, and herbs and continue to simmer for 3 to 4 hours (if you're in a hurry, you can use the stock after about an hour, before it is fully cooked). Turn off the heat, let the stock cool a bit, then strain and discard the solids.

Ladle the stock through a fine-mesh sieve into a nonreactive container, or several small containers, for freezing. If using the stock right away, skim off the fat. Otherwise, let the stock cool and refrigerate it with the fat, which will solidify on top and can then be easily removed before you use it. The stock will keep, covered, in the refrigerator for up to one week or for several months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

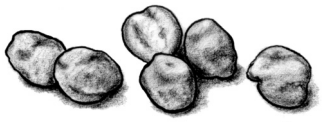
- Save the carcasses of roasted chickens in the freezer and add them to the pot.
- In summer, add a few fresh tomatoes.

Hummus with Preserved Lemon

FROM *My Pantry,* PAGES 44–45

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

¾ cup dried chickpeas, soaked overnight
1 onion, halved
1 carrot, peeled and halved
A few garlic cloves, peeled but whole
Sea salt
1 dried chile (optional)
¼ preserved lemon, rind only, finely chopped
2 tablespoons tahini
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for garnish
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
¼ teaspoon cumin seeds, toasted and ground
A large pinch of cayenne pepper



Drain and rinse the chickpeas thoroughly and put them in a pot with the onion, carrot, all but one of the garlic cloves, some salt, the dried chile (if using), and enough fresh water to cover the chickpeas by an inch or more. Bring to a boil and simmer until the chickpeas are quite tender, 1 to 2 hours. Allow the chickpeaas to cool in the cooking liquid. Discard the onion, carrot, and chile (if you used one). Reserving some of the cooking liquid, drain the chickpeas.

Make the hummus with a mortar and pestle, such as a big Japanese suribachi, or use a food processor or blender. If using a mortar and pestle, pound the remaining garlic clove and a pinch of salt into a smooth paste. Add the preserved lemon and pound until the lemon has completely mixed together with the garlic. Add the chickpeas and mash until they are broken up. Finally, add the tahini, olive oil, lemon juice, cumin, and cayenne. Mix together until smooth, adding some of the reserved cooking liquid if necessary. If using a blender or food processor, start to purée about half of the cooked chickpeas with a little of their cooking liquid. Add the garlic and preserved lemon and when almost completely puréed, add the tahini, olive oil, lemon juice, cumin, and cayenne and mix until smooth, adding more cooking liquid if necessary.

Taste for seasoning and add more salt, cumin, or lemon if needed. When ready to serve, garnish with olive oil and a sprinkling of cumin or cayenne.

Yogurt

FROM *My Pantry,* PAGES 112–113

MAKES 6 TO 8 CUPS

6 to 8 cups goat's, sheep's, or cow's milk, raw or pasteurized, organic
1 packet yogurt starter (creamy or tangy)

Warm the milk in a heavy-bottomed nonreactive pot over low heat, stirring often. (If your heat source is uneven, use a double boiler.) When the milk reaches 185°F, remove the pot from the heat and let cool to 112°F. At this point, I whisk the milk frequently to help it cool more quickly.

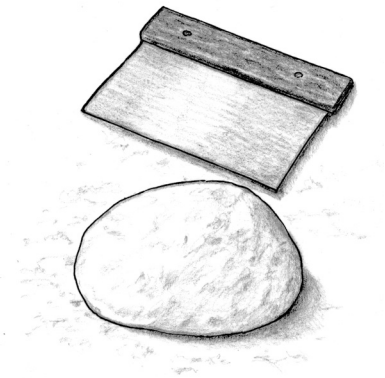
While the milk is cooling, locate a warm spot for your yogurt to sit for 6 to 12 hours. It should be around 110°F. (Heating the oven to 400°F for 10 minutes, then turning it off should create the proper environment.)

When the milk has cooled to 112°F, sprinkle the starter over the milk and let it sit for 2 minutes. Stir gently to dissolve. When the cultured milk has cooled slightly, to about 110°F, cover the pot with a lid, and wrap in a thick towel to insulate it. Place in the oven or other warm spot for 6 to 12 hours, or until the yogurt is thick and creamy. The longer it sits, the tangier it will be. The yogurt can be refrigerated and enjoyed for many days, and it can also be strained to make labneh.

Whole-Wheat Flatbreads

FROM *My Pantry,* PAGE 79

MAKES 16 FLATBREADS



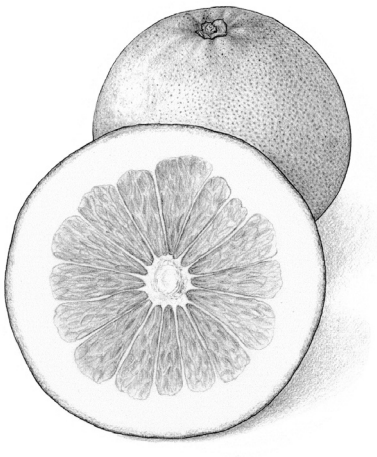
You may have to experiment with different whole-wheat flours before you find one that works well; the one that works best for me is ground very fine and has relatively little bran in it.

2 cups whole-wheat flour
1 teaspoon sea salt
½ teaspoon baking powder
¾ cup warm water, or more
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, and baking powder. Stir in the water and oil. Knead briefly to form a soft, moist dough. If the dough is too dry, add a little more water. Cover with a kitchen towel and let rest for 30 minutes.

Divide the dough into 16 balls. On a lightly floured work surface, use a rolling pin to roll each ball into a 6-by-3-inch oval. Heat a 10-inch cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Cook two flatbreads at a time until they start to brown on the bottom, about 2 minutes. Flip and cook until browned in spots on the other side, about 2 minutes more. Wrap the flatbreads in a clean kitchen towel while still warm to let the breads moisten from the steam.

Just before serving, use tongs to hold each flatbread briefly over an open flame, turning until lightly charred on both sides. Serve warm.



Candied Citrus Peel

FROM *My Pantry,* PAGES 124–125

MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS

4 oranges or Seville oranges, 8 lemons or tangerines, or 3 grapefruits
4½ to 5 cups sugar

Wash the citrus fruit well and cut in half. If using grapefruit, cut into quarters. Juice the fruit and either drink it or reserve it for another use (such as a citrus granita). Put the peels in a medium saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil over low heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Drain the peels, return them to the saucepan, cover again with cold water, bring to a boil and simmer 10 more minutes. At this point, if candying oranges or lemons, test the peel with the point of a knife. If it is tender, then drain and let cool. If it is not yet tender, drain and repeat the process of covering with cold water and bringing to a boil. If you are using grapefruit or Seville oranges, which have more bitter peels, blanch a minimum of 3 times.

Once the peel has cooled, scrape out most of the white part of the peel with a spoon and discard. Slice the peel into long ¼-inch-wide strips, return them to the saucepan, and add 4 cups of sugar for oranges and lemons or 4½ cups for grapefruits. Add 2 cups water and heat the mixture over low heat, stirring often to dissolve the sugar. Allow the peel to cook slowly in the sugar syrup. Have a candy thermometer ready. When the peel is translucent and the bubbles in the syrup start rising smaller and faster, turn up the heat slightly, and cook the syrup to the thread stage, 230° to 234°F.

Turn off the heat and let the peel sit in the syrup for 30 minutes. Set a wire rack on a baking sheet. With a slotted spoon, carefully scoop out the strips of peel and arrange the strips on the rack, not touching one another, to dry overnight. The next day, toss the strips of candied peel with the remaining sugar in a large bowl, separating any strips that stick together. Stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator, candied peel will keep for months.

7 LEAVES, HERBS, AND AROMATICS

"Tending to plants changing throughout the seasons is a delicious meditation for me. It's deeply satisfying to harvest, prepare, and eat food that you've grown yourself."

SUBCHAPTERS

Use Every Part of the Plant

Grow the Essential Herbs Yourself

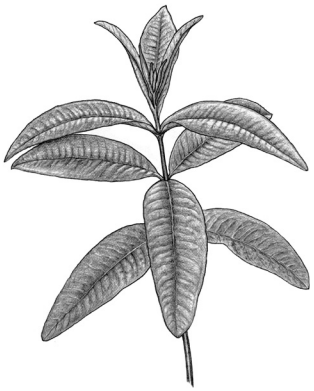
Flavoring With Strong Herbs

CHAPTER REVIEW

Alice always looks for ways to use the whole plant. Backyard trees like Meyer lemon, Kaffir lime, bay, and fig can be used for both their fruit and leaves. Alice uses the leaves of her lime tree for curries, wraps fish in fig leaves and cooks them over the fire or in the oven, and wraps goat cheese in fig leaves and bakes them in the oven. At Chez Panisse, peach leaves are used to make ice cream and bay leaves are used to infuse panna cotta.

Alice maintains a small garden—only 10 feet by 10 feet—and grows what she wants close at hand, such as tender lettuces, greens, and herbs. Alice grows tender herbs such as chives, parsley, chervil, cilantro, mint, and lemon verbena for salads, salsa verde, and tisanes. Tisane is an almost-nightly, post-meal ritual at home and at Chez Panisse. Alice's first choice is lemon verbena, and mint is a close second; but she adjusts the herbs she uses for tisane depending on what is available in the garden.

Stronger herbs like rosemary, thyme, and savory will grow throughout the winter, and Alice loves to use these herbs in meat dishes. Thyme works well in marinades and stocks. Savory is a traditional seasoning for a pot of beans in the south of France. The woody stems of rosemary can be used as skewers for cooking over the fire, and the leaves roasted with almonds. Frying stronger herbs like rosemary and sage mellows their flavor. They can be crumbled over a dish to heighten flavor at the last moment.



RECIPES

Tisane

FROM *The Art of Simple Food,* PAGE 387

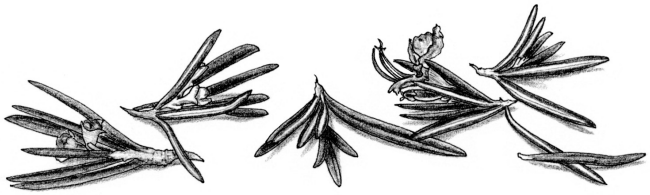
Tisane is a fresh tea, an infusion of fragrant herbs, or flowers and spices, steeped in boiling water. It is a soothing and refreshing finish to a meal, is complementary to most desserts, and offers a mild alternative to coffee. Tisane can be made from such flavorings as lemon verbena, mint, lemon thyme, lemon balm, hyssop, chamomile, citrus rind, and ginger—alone or in combination. It is very beautiful made in a glass teapot so you can see the brilliant green leaves. Rinse several branches of fresh herbs, put them in a teapot (or saucepan), and pour boiling water over them. Let the tisane steep for several minutes and serve. I like to use small clear tea glasses, as they do in Morocco, so the lovely pale green color is visible.

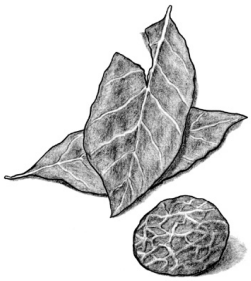
Fried Rosemary

FROM *The Art of Simple Food II,* PAGE 27

Alice finishes many dishes with fried herbs, on their own or mixed with bread crumbs. She loves the crunch and flavor that they add. Rosemary and sage are especially good.

Remove the leaves from a medium sprig of rosemary. Discard the stem. Heat a small heavy-bottomed pan over medium-high heat. Pour in about 1/2 inch olive oil. When the oil is hot, add the leaves. Don't be surprised: the oil will bubble up when the leaves are added. Let them fry for 1 minute and then scoop out with a slotted spoon or fine strainer before they turn brown. Drain on absorbent paper or towel. Sprinkle with salt and a tiny pinch of cayenne, if desired. They will stay crisp for a few hours.





Bay Leaf Panna Cotta

ADAPTED FROM *The Art of Simple Food,* PAGE 373

Almond oil or a flavorless vegetable oil
3 tablespoons water
One ¼-ounce package gelatin
3 cups heavy cream
1 cup milk
¼ cup sugar
3 strips of lemon zest
2 or 3 bay leaves
½ vanilla bean

Brush eight 4-ounce ramekins lightly with oil. Chill the ramekins until ready to use. Measure 3 tablespoons water into a small bowl and sprinkle over the gelatin. Set aside until the gelatin has softened. Combine the cream, milk, sugar, lemon zest, and bay leaves in a heavy saucepan. Split the vanilla bean in half and scrape the seeds into the cream mixture, and add the bean. Heat just to a simmer; do not boil. Remove from the heat. Pour 1 cup of the hot cream over the gelatin and stir to dissolve. Pour the gelatin mixture back into the cream mixture and let it cool until just warm to the touch, about 110°F. Remove the vanilla bean and squeeze all the seeds and liquid from it back into the cream mixture. Strain the mixture and pour into the ramekins. Cover and chill for at least 6 hours.

To serve, run a small knife around the inside of each ramekin. Turn each ramekin over onto a small serving plate, shake gently, and lift off the ramekin. Serve with fresh berries or strawberries or with a fruit compote or sauce.

LEARN MORE

- Read the chapter "Fragrant and Beautiful" in *The Art of Simple Food II*, pages 7–33.

8 COOKING FROM YOUR KITCHEN GARDEN / SALSA VERDE

"[Salsa verde] is very different from a puréed sauce like pesto. It's a sauce that [is] finely chopped so you can sort of see the ingredients in it."

CHAPTER REVIEW

Salsa verde is a versatile, simple sauce traditionally made of parsley, capers, lemon zest, and olive oil that can be served with vegetables, fish, eggs, or chicken—many variations are possible. It adds lively freshness to almost any simple dish. Flat-leafed Italian parsley is preferable, but curly parsley is good, too. Fresh parsley—the fresher the better—is the majority herb, but almost any other fresh, tender herb can enhance a salsa verde. Add mint to your salsa verde to serve it with lamb, add fennel tops to serve it with fish, or add horseradish to serve with beef.

Alice demonstrates a version with finely diced shallots macerated in vinegar. To achieve the fine dice, peel and cut shallots in half, make horizontal cuts then vertical cuts to the base of the root, and slice across the crosshatched cuts.

Salsa Verde

ADAPTED FROM *The Art of Simple Food,* PAGE 45

MAKES ⅔ CUP

Use a sharp knife when you chop parsley (and other herbs). A sharp knife slices cleanly through the leaves, preserving both flavor and color, while a dull knife mashes and bruises them.

The zest is the thin yellow outer layer of the lemon's skin; avoid grating any of the bitter white part (the pith) beneath. The zest brightens the flavor of the sauce, so don't be shy with it; you may need more than one lemon's worth.

Don't hesitate to experiment. Alice makes salsa verde more or less thick depending on what she's using it for. She tends to use less oil when it's for roasted meats and grilled vegetables and more for fish.

⅓ cup coarsely chopped parsley (leaves and thin stems only)
Grated zest of 1 lemon
1 tablespoon capers, rinsed, drained, and coarsely chopped
½ teaspoon salt
Fresh-ground black pepper to taste
½ cup olive oil

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl. Mix well and taste for salt. Let the sauce sit for a while to develop the flavors. If you like, add a diced shallot macerated in vinegar, or 1 small garlic clove chopped very fine.

VARIATIONS

- Other herbs, or combinations of herbs, can replace part or all of the parsley.
- Add a little chopped salt-packed anchovy fillet, or chopped shallot, or chopped hard-cooked egg—or all three.
- Lemon juice or vinegar makes the sauce zestier, but add them just before serving, as the acid will cause the herbs to discolor. (You can macerate a little chopped shallot in the vinegar or lemon, if you wish.)
- For fish and spring vegetables, use parsley, chervil, tarragon, and lemon zest.
- For beef, use parsley, savory, shallot, and horseradish.
- For winter squash, use parsley, thyme, fried sage, and shallots.
- For lamb, use thyme, mint, and shallots.

9 PREPARING A BEAUTIFUL SALAD

"I'm going to show you the most romantic way to wash salad."

SUBCHAPTERS

A French-Inspired Mesclun

Greens for Sautéing

A Salad-Washing Ritual

CHAPTER REVIEW

Mesclun is a Provençal word that describes a mix of salad greens and herbs. Alice brought seeds back from France and planted her entire backyard with lettuces in order to recreate the mesclun salads she'd had in Provence and could not find in the US. She starting putting the mesclun salad on Chez Panisse's menu and promoting the French tradition that a salad goes with every meal.

Other garden greens such as kale, chard, and arugula are easy to grow. A few plants of dinosaur kale or Russian kale will repeatedly yield enough for you to make a serving or two of greens simply sautéed in olive oil and garlic. Alice uses the arugula plant at every stage of its growth: she incorporates the raw small, tender arugula, or "rocket," into salads, pounds the more mature leaves into a pesto, and sprinkles its peppery white flowers over salads.

RECIPES

Mesclun Salad

ADAPTED FROM *Fanny in France,* PAGE 153

6 SERVINGS

For the mesclun mix, combine delicate lettuces and herbs, including rocket, chervil, and frisée, for a variety of textures and flavors. In cool seasons, add hardier leaves of varieties such as chicories and radicchios, if you like.

6 generous handfuls mesclun mix, washed and dried
4 tablespoons vinaigrette*
Sea salt
Fresh-ground black pepper

When ready to serve, put the lettuce in a wide salad bowl. Pour half of the vinaigrette over the salad leaves and toss gently to coat, using your hands. The leaves should be lightly coated with dressing so they glisten. Taste the salad. If you need to, pour additional dressing over the salad and toss again. Add salt and pepper, if needed. Sprinkle the salad with the petals of the edible flowers, if you have them. Eat immediately.

*Refer to Chapter 5: A Well-Stocked Pantry for vinaigrette recipe and variations.

Washing and Drying Lettuces

FROM *In the Green Kitchen,* PAGE 11

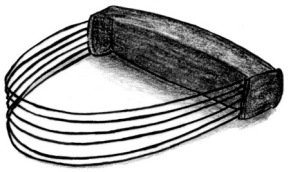
To wash lettuce, fill a large basin with cold water—your kitchen sink or a large bowl. Before washing heads of lettuce, remove any damaged outer leaves and cut off the stem ends. Separate the leaves, dropping them into the water, and swish them around with your hands. Leave the lettuce in the water a minute or two to let any dirt or sand settle to the bottom, then lift the leaves out of the water and put into a colander to drain. If the lettuce is still gritty, change the water and wash again.

Dry the lettuce thoroughly. If the leaves are wet, the dressing won't stick and its flavor will be diluted. Put the leaves into a salad spinner in small batches, no more than half full at a time, and spin the leaves dry. Empty the water from the spinner after each batch. Lay the leaves out in a single layer on a clean dish towel and roll the towel up. (If you don't have a salad spinner, drain the lettuce in a colander before layering the leaves between towels and rolling the towels up.) Refrigerate until you are ready to dress and serve the salad.

LEARN MORE

- For more about lettuces and salad greens, read "Tender Leaves" on pages 35–50 in *The Art of Simple Food II*.

10 CHEZ PANISSE COOKING / GALETTE



"I want to bring you into Chez Panisse to show how the values of my cooking at home translate into a restaurant."

SUBCHAPTERS

CHAPTER REVIEW

Chez Panisse is an extension of Alice's home kitchen. It is a comfortable place to cook and the open kitchen allows guests to look in on the process. Like Alice's home meal-planning process, menus are composed based on the best ingredients available each day. The cooks taste the dishes together to foster open dialogue and collaboration, and to refine their palettes and the vocabulary around taste.

Galette is made over and over at Chez Panisse. The galette is always on the menu, but the fruits and fillings change with the seasons. The pastry dough originally came from Jacques Pépin and has been tweaked over the years. Carrie Lewis, pastry chef at Chez Panisse, demonstrates the method for making the dough.

RECIPES

Galette Dough

FROM *Chez Panisse Fruit,* PAGES 290–291

MAKES ABOUT 20 OUNCES OF DOUGH,

ENOUGH FOR 2 OPEN GALETTES OR TARTS, OR 1 COVERED TART

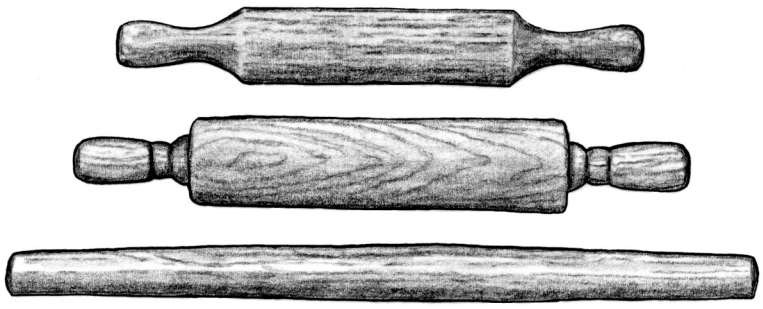
We make this dough every day at the restaurant, and we've included the recipe in several cookbooks. We use it for tarts both savory and sweet, of every shape and size.

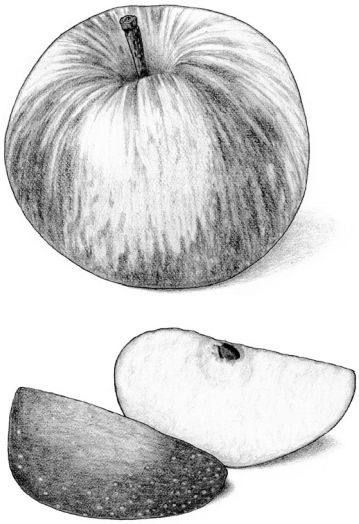
2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
12 tablespoons (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, chilled, cut into ½-inch pieces
7 tablespoons ice water

Combine the flour, sugar, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Cut 4 tablespoons of the butter into the flour mixture with a pastry blender, mixing until the dough resembles coarse cornmeal. (Butter dispersed throughout the flour in tiny pieces makes the dough tender.) Cut in the remaining 8 tablespoons (1 stick) of butter with the pastry blender, just until the biggest pieces of butter are the size of large peas—or a little larger. (These bigger pieces of butter in the dough make it flaky.)

Dribble 7 tablespoons of ice water (½ cup less 1 tablespoon) into the flour mixture in several stages, tossing and mixing between additions, until the dough just holds together. Toss the mixture with your hands, letting it fall through your fingers. Do not pinch or squeeze the dough together or you will overwork it, making it tough. Keep tossing the mixture until it starts to pull together; it will look rather ropy, with some dry patches. If it looks like there are more dry patches than ropy parts, add another tablespoon of water and toss the mixture until it comes together. Divide the dough in half, firmly press each half into a ball, and wrap tightly in plastic wrap, pressing down to flatten each ball into a 4-inch disk. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before rolling out. (The dough will keep in the freezer for a few weeks.)

When you are ready to roll out the dough, take 1 disk from the refrigerator at a time. Let it soften slightly so that it is malleable but still cold. Unwrap the dough and press the edges of the disk so that there are no cracks. On a lightly floured surface roll out the disk into a 14-inch circle about ⅛ inch thick. Brush off excess flour from both sides with a dry pastry brush. Transfer the dough to a parchment-lined baking sheet and refrigerate at least ½ hour before using. (The rolled-out circles can be frozen and used the next day.)





Apple and Frangipane Galette

ADAPTED FROM *Chez Panisse Fruit,* PAGE 14

8 SERVINGS

10 ounces galette dough, rolled into a 14-inch circle
¼ cup frangipane (recipe below)
2½ pounds flavorful apples, quartered, peeled, and cored (peels and cores reserved)
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
½ cup plus 5 tablespoons sugar

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Place a pizza stone, if you have one, on the center rack.

Remove the galette dough from the freezer or refrigerator and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet or pizza pan. Spread the frangipane in a thin layer over the dough, leaving a 1-inch border at the outside edge.

Slice the apples ¼-inch thick. At the outer edge of the tart shell, arrange apple slices in a slightly overlapping ring 1½ inches in from the edge of the dough. Working inward, arrange the remaining apples in tightly overlapping concentric circles, each smaller than the one before, until you reach the center. Rotate the tart while twisting and folding the overhanging dough over onto itself at regular 1-inch intervals, crimping and nudging the folded dough up against the apples and containing them within a border that resembles a length of rope. Gently brush the melted butter over the apple slices and onto the dough border. Evenly sprinkle 2 tablespoons of sugar over the buttered pastry edge and another 3 tablespoons sugar evenly over the apples.

Bake in the center of the oven (preferably on a pizza stone). Rotate the tart after 15 to 20 minutes and once or twice more as it finishes baking, to ensure even browning of the crust. Bake about 45 minutes in all, until the apples are soft, their edges have browned a bit and the crust has caramelized to a dark golden brown. Remove the galette from the oven and carefully slide it off the parchment directly onto a cooling rack. Let cool at least 15 minutes before glazing and slicing.

Make the glaze while the tart is baking: Put the reserved apple peels and cores and the remaining ½ cup sugar in a saucepan, pour in just enough water to cover, and simmer for about 25 minutes. Strain the syrup and brush it gently over the finished tart before serving.

VARIATIONS

- Serve with vanilla ice cream or softly whipped cream.
- Almost any ripe fruit will make a delicious galette.

NOTE: Alice uses sugar that is USDA organic, non-GMO, and fair-trade certified. These labels help ensure that the people taking care of the land are paid a fair wage and using best practices for farming.

Frangipane

FROM *Chez Panisse Fruit,* PAGE 299

MAKES ½ CUP

Frangipane is a culinary term of complicated history and imprecise meaning ("almond-flavored mixture" comes close). This frangipane recipe is for a fluffy almond butter that the Chez Panisse dessert kitchen finds indispensable, using it as a base for plum, fig, orange, apple, and pineapple tarts.

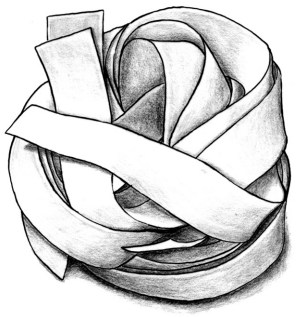
3 ounces (⅓ cup) almond paste
2 teaspoons sugar
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature
1 tablespoon flour
1 egg
½ teaspoon kirsch
1 pinch salt

Blend together the almond paste and sugar with an electric mixer or beat together by hand. Beat in the butter. Mix in the flour, egg, kirsch, and salt and beat until fluffy. Keeps for one week, refrigerated.

LEARN MORE

- Make ice cream to accompany your galette, following the the Vanilla Ice Cream recipe on page 374 of *The Art of Simple Food,* and try some of the variations on the basic recipe.

11 CHEZ PANISSE COOKING / RAVIOLI



"The ingredients for this filling are simple: ricotta cheese, olive oil, salt, pepper, green garlic, and thyme."

SUBCHAPTERS

CHAPTER REVIEW

Brian Bligh, Chez Panisse Café chef, demonstrates how to make pasta dough from scratch. Then, he creates ricotta ravioli from the dough. There are many different fillings you can substitute to change the flavors of the ravioli, as well as countless pastas you can shape using the basic egg dough.

RECIPES

Fresh Pasta

ADAPTED FROM *The Art of Simple Food,* PAGE 89

4 SERVINGS

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 whole eggs
2 large egg yolks
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon olive oil

Measure the flour and sift onto a wooden cutting board or pasta board. Make a well in the flour and crack in 2 eggs and 2 egg yolks. Mix with a fork, as though scrambling the eggs, incorporating the flour bit by bit. Add olive oil and continue to mix. When the flour is too stiff to mix with a fork, finish the dough by hand, kneading lightly. Continue to turn and knead the dough until it feels smooth and elastic. Shape the dough into a disk and wrap in plastic. Let rest at least an hour before rolling.

Roll out by hand on a lightly floured board or using a pasta machine. When using a machine, roll the pasta through the widest setting, fold into thirds, and pass through the machine again. Repeat two more times. Then roll, decreasing the setting on the machine one notch at a time, until the pasta is the desired thickness.

VARIATIONS

- To make herb pasta, before adding the eggs mix into the flour ¼ cup chopped parsley, marjoram, or thyme, or 2 tablespoons chopped rosemary or sage.
- To make spinach pasta, gently sauté in a little butter ¼ pound spinach leaves until tender. Cool and squeeze dry, and blend until smooth with 1 egg and 1 egg yolk; use this purée in place of the eggs and egg yolks.

Ricotta Ravioli

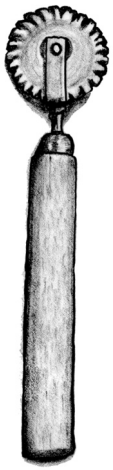
ADAPTED FROM *The Art of Simple Food,* PAGE 271

4 SERVINGS, APPROXIMATELY

12 ounces ricotta cheese
1 stalk green garlic or 2 garlic cloves, chopped
Leaves of 2 thyme sprigs, chopped
Salt
Fresh-ground black pepper
1 recipe Fresh Pasta (recipe above)
Wild mushroom sauce (recipe below)

In a small bowl, combine the cheese, green garlic, thyme, salt, and pepper. Taste the mixture for salt and correct as needed.

To make ravioli, roll out the pasta fairly thin and cut into sheets about 14 inches long. Keep the stack of well-floured pasta sheets under a towel to keep them from drying as you work with one sheet at a time. Pipe or spoon 1 tablespoon of the ricotta filling along the lower third of a sheet of pasta. Leave about 1½ inches between each blob of filling. Spray very lightly with a fine mist of water. Fold the upper half of the pasta over the lower half; then, starting at the fold, gently coax all the air out of the ravioli, pressing the two layers of pasta together with your fingertips. When the sheet of ravioli has been formed and pressed, use a zigzag rolling cutter to cut off the bottom edge and to cut between each portion of filling. Separate the ravioli and lay them out on a sheet pan sprinkled with flour; make sure they aren't touching each other or they will stick together. Cover with a towel or parchment paper and refrigerate until ready to cook. Keep refrigerated right up to the time of cooking to prevent the filling from seeping through the pasta, which can cause the ravioli to stick to the pan.



Cook the ravioli in salted simmering water for 5 to 6 minutes, until the pasta is done. Drain the ravioli and add to the pan of wild mushroom sauce. Stir gently to mix, and serve on a platter.

VARIATIONS

- Wash and stem 1 bunch of chard or spinach. Cook in butter until soft. Cool, squeeze out all the excess water, chop well, and stir into the ricotta mixture.
- This recipe is for a simple filling that works equally well as a stuffing for cannelloni or squash blossoms. The stuffed blossoms can be poached or baked.

- For a different sauce, cook a few whole sage leaves in butter over medium heat until the butter is slightly brown and the leaves are crisp.
- Sauce the ravioli with tomato sauce.
- Serve in bowls with a ladle of hot broth poured over.
- For cannelloni use ½ recipe pasta; roll and cut the sheets into rectangles about 4 by 3 inches. Cook in salted boiling water until done, cool in cold water, and lay the rectangles out on a cloth. Pipe or spoon a couple of tablespoons of filling lengthwise along one third of a rectangle of pasta. Gently roll the pasta to form a large straw. Place the cannelloni, seam side down, in a buttered baking dish. Cover with 1½ cups tomato sauce and bake for 30 minutes at 400°F.

Wild Mushroom Sauce

1 pound wild mushrooms (chanterelles, porcini, hedgehogs, black trumpets)
½ onion, chopped
1 bay leaf
2 or 3 thyme sprigs
4 tablespoons butter
Salt
Fresh-ground black pepper
1½ cups chicken stock (optional)
Lemon juice (optional)
Gremolata: 3 tablespoons chopped parsley, 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest, 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
Parmesan cheese

Carefully clean the mushrooms, trimming away any discolored and soft spots, and removing any dirt and leaves. Tear or cut the mushrooms into rough quarters.

Prepare a quick mushroom broth: Combine the mushroom trimmings in a small saucepan with the onion, bay leaf, and thyme. Cover with 1½ cups of water and simmer for 10 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve and set aside. (Alternatively, use chicken stock for the sauce.)

Sauté the mushrooms with 2 tablespoons butter over low heat until golden and softened through. Season with salt and pepper. If the mushrooms release a lot of liquid, cook until it evaporates and the mushrooms brown.

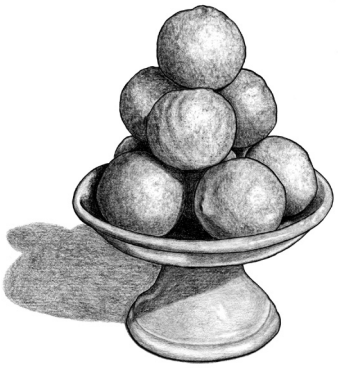
Add the broth or chicken stock to the mushrooms and simmer briefly. Swirl in 2 tablespoons of cold butter to thicken slightly. Taste for salt and, if needed, add a few drops of lemon juice.

To serve, add the cooked ravioli and warm briefly. Spoon the ravioli and mushrooms onto a warm platter and pour over the remaining sauce. Garnish with gremolata and grated Parmesan. Serve immediately.

LEARN MORE

- For more tips on pasta-making technique, read "Making Fresh Pasta" on pages 86–88 of *The Art of Simple Food*, and "Making Cannelloni and Ravioli" on page 90.

12 FOLLOW THE RHYTHMS OF NATURE / SEASONAL EATING



"Now, you think this is a simple process of finding beautiful fruit and putting it in a bowl, but it is really a way of expressing ripeness, of seasonality, of purity. It's about everything that we believe in."

SUBCHAPTERS

Taste and Taste Again

Repurpose Unworthy Fruit

Expressing Seasonality

Finding Ripeness in Every Season

CHAPTER REVIEW

People felt that the fruit bowl was an audacious idea but Alice embraced that audaciousness and now the fruit bowl is on the Chez Panisse dessert menu every day. Each fruit bowl is a snapshot of that particular day of the season—capturing that moment is at the heart of Alice's cooking philosophy. When writer Michael Pollan visited Chez Panisse, he was intrigued by the fruit bowl, which was listed on the dessert menu for nearly the same price as a sweet dessert. He found the experience of eating it to be unforgettable.

Alice makes a fruit bowl at home to bring that picture of seasonality into her kitchen. To make your own fruit bowl, start with seasonal, organic fruits at the peak of their season. Engage all of your senses as you select the fruit. Pick up the fruit, feel its weight and the texture of its skin or peel. Color, healthy skins, aroma, and the leaves and stems indicate ripeness and freshness. As you cut through the fruit to taste, pay attention to the texture of the flesh. Most importantly, taste every piece of fruit to make sure it's perfectly in season.

ALICE'S GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING FRUIT FOR THE FRUIT BOWL:

- Aliveness! Look for fruit with a just-picked quality.
- Smell and taste for flavor and ripeness.
- Consider what combinations of fruits will taste good together.
- Choose how to present the fruit. (The fruit bowl at Chez Panisse often has a fig leaf lining the bowl.)
- Some fruits are left whole, such as mandarins and berries, or sliced, such as pears and plums.

When you taste a fruit and decide that it isn't at the right stage of ripeness for your fruit bowl, put it to use in another dish. Grapes that don't look lively enough for the fruit bowl may be ideal for a sherbet; slightly under-ripe Bosc pears can go well in a chicory salad.

The fruit bowl is about discovery. When you're at your farmers' market, try fruits you've never seen before, and ask farmers what fruits they're looking forward to harvesting. Get to know what varieties are unique to your area.

For Alice, a menu is a representation of the moment of the season, and she plans menus to showcase food at its perfect ripeness. Alice created seasonal menus in this chapter with a home cook in mind.

Winter

The variety and colors of winter vegetables at the farmers' market can be just as beautiful as they are in the summer season. Look for carrots and radishes of all colors, chicories, chard, kale, collards, cabbages, cauliflower, broccolis, beets, and winter squashes. Try stews and braises with Moroccan or Indian spices to add warmth to winter vegetable dishes. Winter fruits like apples and pears are available throughout the winter. There are abundant winter citrus varieties, including some of Alice's favorites—kumquats, blood oranges, mandarins, and grapefruit.

Leek and potato soup with pepper and chives
Roast pork loin with braised red cabbage
Pink Lady apple galette

Romaine salad with shaved winter radishes, beets, and carrots
Soft polenta with wild mushroom ragù
Chocolate bark, candied citrus peel, and dates

Spicy winter squash soup
Duck leg confit with wilted greens and farro
Meyer lemon curd tart

Spring

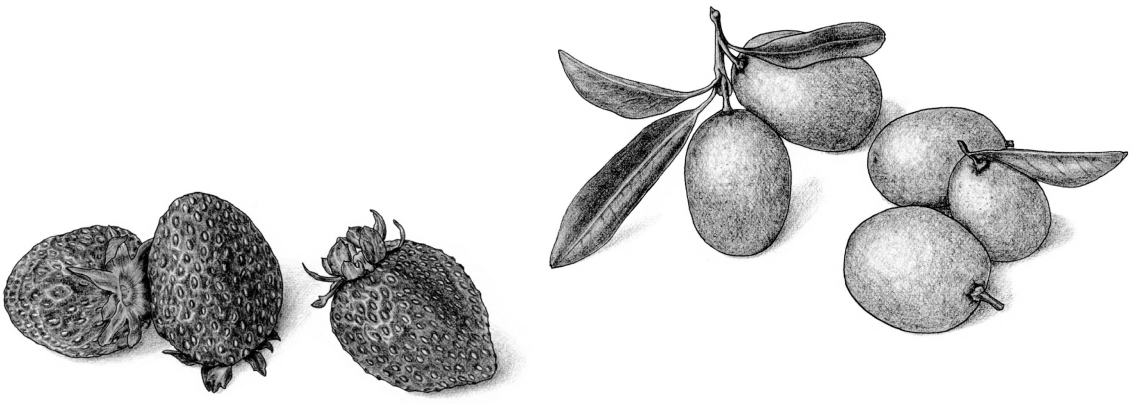
Spring is the season for green vegetables so young and tender that they can be eaten raw or very lightly sautéed. Look for green garlic, nettles, young leeks, small turnips, baby artichokes, asparagus, fava beans, spinach, new potatoes, peas, and morel mushrooms. At Chez Panisse, everyone with a free hand is shucking young favas and peas during spring. Spring lamb and local wild salmon become available, and tender herbs like tarragon, chervil, mint, parsley, rocket, and chives begin to arrive.

Alice loves when the seasons overlap, like spring strawberries and the last of the winter kumquats coming together in a sweet-tart dessert. She looks forward to cherries and Blenheim apricots—a variety with a jam-like, concentrated flavor.

Warm asparagus salad with lemon vinaigrette
Fresh fettuccine with peas and morels
Blood orange upside down cake

Mesclun salad with shaved radishes
Poached wild salmon with carrots, turnips, and herb butter
Baked stuffed apricots

Halibut carpaccio with shallots and mustard flowers
Leg of lamb with potato and green garlic gratin
Rhubarb and strawberry sherbet



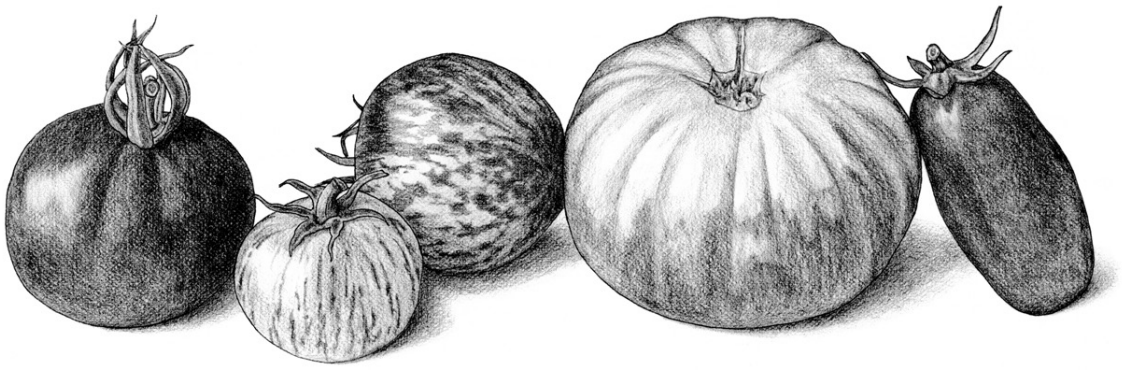
Summer

Summer starts with cherry tomatoes of all shapes and colors. Later the heirloom varieties arrive—such as Purple Cherokee, Chocolate Stripe, and Black Brandywine—and Chez Panisse begins to put tomato salads on the menu. Late-summer dry-farmed Early Girl tomatoes are great for preserving to fill out your pantry with the taste of summer. Alice buys them in bulk to preserve both at Chez Panisse and at home. The restaurant gets summer corn fresh daily. At the farmers' market, ask when it was picked. The sugars can turn to starch in only a few days and lose the corn's natural sweetness. Other summer vegetable market staples include basil, green beans, eggplant, shell beans, summer squash, peppers, and garlic. For summertime stone fruit varieties like peaches, plums, and nectarines test for ripeness by pushing gently near the stem. A little bit of give means it is ready to be eaten as-is or used in a simple dessert.

White corn soup with roasted sweet chile purée
Baked halibut and zucchini with salsa verde
Sliced peaches with raspberry sauce

Heirloom tomato salad with vinaigrette and basil
Grilled steak with roasted potatoes and aïoli
Biscotti and blackberries

Green bean and roasted pepper salad with hazelnuts
Garlic and goat cheese pudding soufflé with wilted spinach
Plum sherbet with langues de chat



Fall

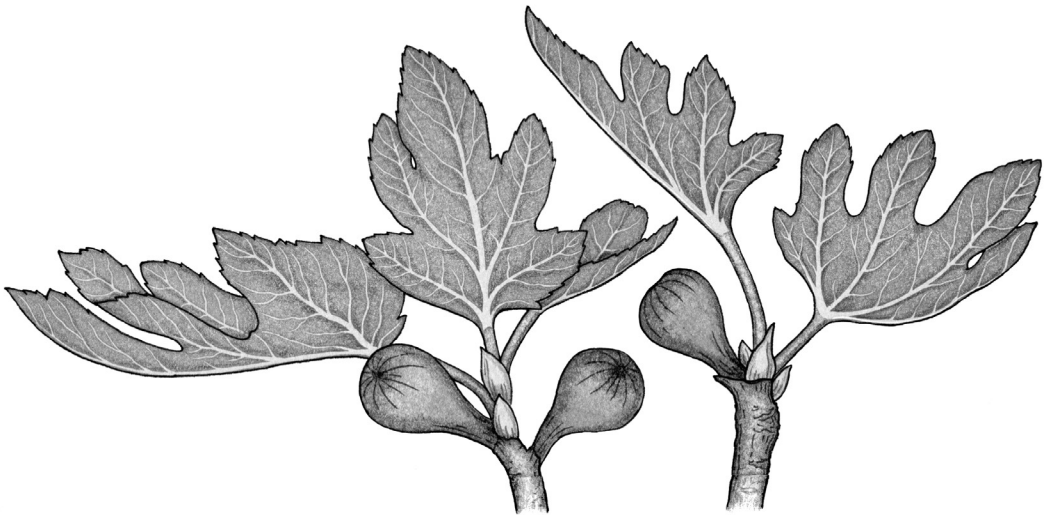
In Northern California, hot summer days come late and the crispness of fall sometimes begins as late as early November. By then the markets will have broccoli and Brussels sprouts, almonds and walnuts, the new crop of olive oil, and wild porcinis. Alice cooks thin sliced Brussels sprouts and sautés them with bacon, thyme, and lemon. Fall is a good time to roast vegetables, and make puréed soups and squash-filled raviolis. After preserving berries and stone fruit of summer, fall fruits such as apples, pears, grapes, quince, persimmons, and—especially—pomegranates are a welcome change.

Alice plans early for Thanksgiving. She sources an organic turkey from her friend Frank Reiss at Good Shepherd Poultry Ranch, who is dedicated to raising heritage breeds. Plenty of stuffing with wild mushrooms and walnuts is a must. Raw oysters and a salad with pomegranate seeds are usually on the menu. For dessert she makes pumpkin pie and Fanny always makes persimmon pudding.

Wild mushroom crostini with warm chicory salad
Braised chicken leg with saffron rice and glazed carrots
Pear tarte Tatin

Curly endive salad with apples and walnuts
Squash ravioli with fried sage
Persimmon pudding

Antipasto with fresh ricotta, prosciutto, and shaved fennel salad
Fall minestrone with rocket pesto
Baked figs with honey cream

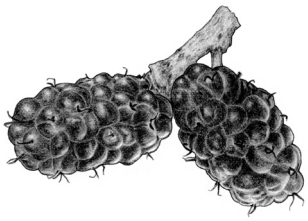


AFTERWORD, 40 YEARS OF CHEZ PANISSE
BY MICHAEL POLLAN

I arrived at the party that is Chez Panisse fairly late in its history, sometime during its fourth decade. My first meal at the restaurant, upstairs in the Café, came during the late spring or early summer of 2001, and a decade later, I cannot tell you what I had for dinner. It might have been the salmon, which at the time were still running not far outside the Golden Gate. The only thing I really remember from that meal was not a dish exactly, at least nothing cooked, though it did appear on the menu. It was, very simply, a bowl of fruit—some peaches. The menu gave the name of the farmer and the variety, neither of which meant anything to me at the time. But figuring those peaches had to be something pretty special to earn a spot on that menu—and to command a price only a dollar or two shy of the profiteroles and galette—I ordered it for dessert, not quite sure whether a plain bowl of fruit on a restaurant menu was best interpreted as an expression of culinary modesty or culinary audacity.

What arrived at the table was a small, unpolished bowl of hammered copper set atop a round, hammered copper base, and in that bowl rested two perfect peaches wreathed in a scatter of equally perfect raspberries. But by "perfect" I don't just mean perfect-looking, like a picture of fruit in a painting or magazine, though they were that, too: blushing, downy, plumped with juice. No, this was the higher perfection Ralph Waldo Emerson had in mind when he wrote, in reference to a very different fruit, "There are only ten minutes in the life of a pear when it is perfect to eat." In the case of a peach, that window is probably closer to seven minutes, and in the case of raspberries, maybe five. The wonder of it was that the kitchen had somehow arranged for those peaches and raspberries to land on our table not a moment sooner or later than that narrow interlude of perfection.

At the risk of offending the restaurant's many gifted chefs, that unadorned bowl of unimproved fruit strikes me as the essence of Chez Panisse, captures the restaurant's philosophy in a copper bowl. Since it first appeared on the menu in 1991, the fruit bowl has been Alice Waters's wordless way of saying that the true genius behind her food resides in the farmers who grew it and the breeders who bred it; the chef merely celebrates that genius by seizing on the moment of



moments and setting it off between the quotation marks of a dish. Which is why the menu goes to the trouble of informing us that that the peach is a Sun Crest, the pear a Warren, and the tiny tangerine a kishu. There are times, the kitchen is saying, when no amount of culinary artifice can improve on what nature has already perfected, and it would be folly—hubris!—to try.

Not that there isn't a kind of genius in selecting that perfect peach or pear or tangerine. Samantha Greenwood, who worked in pastry back when the fruit bowl made its first appearance, remembers the hours spent sorting through bushel baskets looking for the Elect—a few dozen peaches worthy of the copper bowl. On the days when she couldn't find enough, the fruit bowl simply fell off the menu.

The fruit bowl is also a kind of timepiece, a way of marking the seasonal calendar, which is a rite that has always been central to the restaurant's project. When Churchill's kishus show up it must be late December; Swanton's strawberries say May, and the mulberries—the most fleeting fruit of all—signal the start of summer: somewhere around the third week of June. These moments remind us exactly where we are in the round of the year, or rather, where nature is. But try not to miss the moment of the mulberries, a fruit so fragile and ephemeral it's fallen completely out of commerce, except here on Shattuck Avenue on the very day they arrive. The mulberries, which come from a single tree in Sonoma owned by a man named Hugh Byrne, perhaps best exemplify the restaurant's fierce devotion to the nick of time.

Okay, but is it cooking?

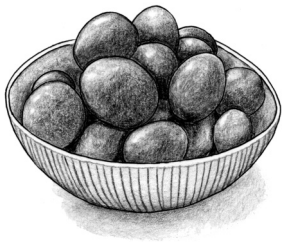
Some would say no; the rap in certain culinary circles is that what Chez Panisse does best more closely resembles inspired shopping than inspired cooking. But I doubt that particular critique carries much of a sting in this particular kitchen. For Alice Waters's genius has been to show us there can be no inspired cooking without inspired shopping and, behind that, inspired farming. It's become a cliché of restaurant menus to mention farms, but Chez Panisse was the first to share bylines—pride of authorship—with the men and women who grow the food, recognizing that many of them are as gifted as any who have passed through the fabled kitchen. So we learn that the kishu was grown by Jim Churchill and Lisa Brenneis in Ojai, the Warren pear by Farmer Al at Frog Hollow Farm in Brentwood, and the Sun Crest peach by Mas Masumoto down near Fresno. The modesty of the fruit bowl consists in these acknowledgments.

But make no mistake, there is a certain audacity in play here too. It is the audacity of a Marcel Duchamp or Andy Warhol, artists who understood that sometimes the best art is found, not made. To pluck something out of the welter of the world and put a frame around it, or in this case a copper bowl, is a way of making us stop and pay attention, so that we might see the familiar with fresh eyes, and in this case not just eyes, but with every sense. Rightly seen, rightly tasted, the fruit bowl reminds us, the commonplace becomes miraculous.

LEARN MORE

- For concise information about varieties, seasonality, and cooking inspiration, read the introductory essays about individual fruits in *Chez Panisse Fruit*. There is also an extensive bibliography for further reading.
- Read "Fruit in the Garden" on pages 403–410 of *The Art of Simple Food II*.
- Preserving is a wonderful way to continue enjoying fruit after its season has passed. For more about preserving, see "Preserving Vegetables and Fruit" in *The Art of Simple Food II,* pages 325–355.

13 A MARKET FRESH DINNER / PLANNING AND PREP



"I usually think of menus in three courses: a salad, a main dish, and a sweet end. I'm also wanting a contrast of [flavors], textures, color, and temperatures on the plates."

SUBCHAPTERS

CHAPTER REVIEW

When you're having people over for a meal, don't leave things to the last minute. Plan your menu and cooking ahead of time. Alice recommends leaving only one hot menu component to finish the evening of your dinner party. You'll be able to spend more time with your guests and enjoy yourself.

Market Fresh Dinner Menu

Roasted almonds with rosemary and sautéed olives
Grilled chicken or chicken mattone
Fingerling potatoes with aïoli
Green salad with shaved fennel
Pear compote with crab apple jelly

Before you start making preparations and cooking, take some time to get organized. Think through the steps for each dish and how long the steps will take. Gather the ingredients and equipment you will need. Make a plan for the sequence of the preparations. If it is helpful, make a prep list to work from and check off the tasks as you go. (That's what the pros do!) Allow yourself enough time to enjoy the process and the pleasure of organizing your *mise en place*. In this chapter, Alice makes her preparations so that all that remains to finish the dinner will be to cook the chicken, warm the potatoes, toss the salad, and serve.

First, season the chicken breasts so that the salt and flavorings have time to penetrate before cooking later. Alice boils the potatoes so that they are cooked through and only need to be warmed and browned on the grill or in the same pan as the chicken closer to dinnertime.

After cooking the potatoes, Alice makes the aïoli. Aïoli is used all the time at Chez Panisse and has many variations. Aïoli is essentially a mayonnaise with an added garlic flavoring. It is an emulsified sauce that takes practice, but it is an important sauce to learn because it's so versatile.

Alice has been serving roasted almonds with herbs at Chez Panisse for a very long time. They make for a great bite to have ready when your guests walk in the door. Roasting the almonds and rosemary at a low temperature allows for a greater margin of time to check on the almonds and avoid burning. The olives can be ready in the pan with herbs, citrus rind, and olive oil and warmed just before your guests arrive.

Prepare the fruit compote. It is easy to make and the flavors improve as it sits. For this very simple dessert, Alice uses whatever fruit is in season and sometimes a mix of fruits.

NOTE

Alice finishes the Grilled Chicken and Fingerling Potatoes in Chapter 14: A Market Fresh Dinner / Finish and Serve.

RECIPES

Grilled Chicken or Chicken Mattone

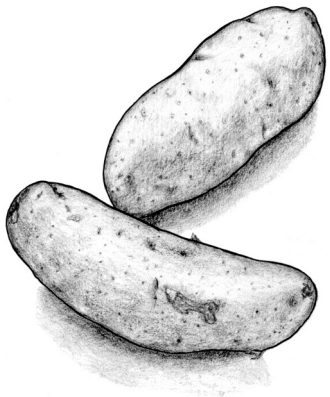
Season 2 chicken breasts (boned, skin on) liberally with salt, pepper, and thyme, and drizzle with olive oil. If dinner is more than a few hours away, put the chicken in the refrigerator and pull it out and hour before you are ready to cook so that it has time to come to room temperature. (Always wash your hands after handling raw chicken.)

NOTE

Recipes for cooking the chicken on the grill and on the stove top may be found in Chapter 14: A Market Fresh Dinner / Finish and Serve.

Green Salad with Shaved Fennel

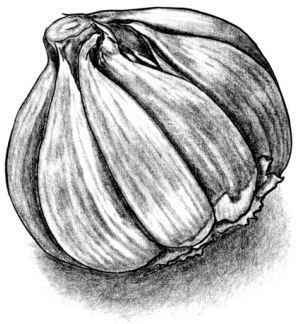
Prepare the salad greens; see Chapter 9: Preparing a Beautiful Salad. Prepare a vinaigrette; see Chapter 5: A Well-Stocked Pantry.



Parboiled Potatoes

1½ pounds fingerling potatoes or small new potatoes

Start the potatoes in cold, salted water. Starting them cold helps the skins stay intact and holds in moisture so that you don't end up with dry potatoes. Boil the potatoes until they are tender. Test for doneness with a knife—it should slide in easily when the potatoes are done. If smaller potatoes finish before the larger ones, pull them out to cool while the larger potatoes finish cooking.



Aïoli / Garlic Mayonnaise

ADAPTED FROM *The Art of Simple Food,* PAGE 46

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

Velvety, luscious, garlicky mayonnaise—what the French call aïoli (pronounced eye-oh-lee)—is another sauce Alice uses all the time: on sandwiches; with vegetables, both raw and cooked; with meat and fish; as the binder for chicken salad and egg salad; and as a base for sauces such as tartar sauce. Most children, even very young ones, love aïoli and will happily use it as a dip for bite after bite of bread, carrots, potatoes, and even vegetables they might otherwise refuse.

Two or three small cloves of garlic per egg yolk, pounded with a mortar and pestle, make a fairly pungent garlic mayonnaise—depending on the garlic. The strength of garlic's flavor can very a lot, depending on freshness, season, and variety. Alice always pounds the garlic in a mortar and pestle and reserves half of it, so she can add it later if the aïoli needs it. (You can always add more garlic, but you can't subtract it.) It's important to pound the garlic to a very smooth purée so the sauce will be garlicky through and through, not just a mayonnaise with bits of garlic in it.

One egg yolk will absorb up to one cup of oil, but you can add less if you don't need that much mayonnaise. Whisk in oil drop by drop at first, adding more as you go. It is much easier to whisk when the bowl is steadied; to help hold it still, set it on top of a coiled dish towel.

Adding a small amount of water to the egg yolk (at room temperature) before you incorporate the oil helps prevent the sauce from separating or "breaking." If mayonnaise does separate, stop adding oil, but don't despair. Just crack a fresh egg, separate the yolk into a new bowl, add a little water as before, and slowly whisk in first the broken sauce and then the rest of the oil.

Make aïoli half an hour ahead of time, to give the flavors a chance to marry. As with anything made with raw eggs, if you're not going to serve mayonnaise within an hour, refrigerate it. Aïoli tastes best the day it's made.

2 or 3 small garlic cloves
A pinch of salt
1 egg yolk, room temperature
½ teaspoon water
1 cup olive oil

Peel the garlic cloves and the salt. Separate the egg yolk into a mixing bowl, add about half the garlic and the water. Mix well with a whisk. Measure the olive oil into a cup with a pour spout, and slowly dribble the oil into the egg yolk mixture, whisking constantly. As the egg yolk absorbs the oil, the sauce will thicken, lighten in color, and become opaque. This will happen rather quickly. Then you can add the oil a little faster, whisking all the while.

If the sauce is thicker than you like, thin it with a few drops of water. Taste and add more salt and garlic, as desired.

VARIATIONS

Plain mayonnaise—made the same way as aïoli, but without garlic, and finished with a touch of vinegar or lemon juice can be varied in many different ways:

- Mustard or horseradish mayonnaise is wonderful for sandwiches.
- An herb mayonnaise with chopped herbs such as parsley, chives, tarragon, and chervil and a little lemon juice goes extremely well with fish and shellfish.
- To make tartar sauce, add chopped pickles, pickle juice, grated onion, capers, parsley, and a pinch of cayenne.
- To make a beautiful green mayonnaise, pound watercress or basil in the mortar and pestle and add to the mayonnaise.

Sautéed Olives

ADAPTED FROM *Fanny in France,* PAGE 99

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

1 cup olives, preferably Luques or Picholine
2 to 3 long strips of lemon zest
¼ teaspoon fennel seeds
2 or 3 bay leaves
1 tablespoon olive oil

Take the olives out of their brine and rinse. Put the olives into a sauté pan and toss with the lemon zest, fennel seeds, bay leaves, and olive oil. Add a little water and warm the marinated olives gently over low heat for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Spoon into a bowl. Heat them just before serving, and make sure you put another small dish nearby for the pits.

Roasted Almonds with Rosemary

ADAPTED FROM *My Pantry,* PAGE 30

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS

Roasting a mixture of nuts at a low temperature is a wonderful method. At high temperatures, some kinds of nuts in the mixture may burn, but they won't if roasted with the others at a low temperature. The delightfully crisped rosemary leaves are as satisfying as the roasted nuts themselves.

3 cup almonds
½ cup loosely packed rosemary leaves 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon sea salt

Preheat the oven to 275°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. In a medium bowl, mix together the nuts and rosemary. Add the oil and salt and toss gently until the nuts and rosemary are evenly coated.

Spread the nuts and rosemary on the baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes. Stir the nuts and return them to the oven for 10 more minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and break a few nuts open. If their centers are golden brown they are done; if the nuts still need more time, stir them and return them to the oven, checking every 5 minutes or so. You want them to roast fully, not burn. I usually find 35 minutes is about right.

Pear Compote with Crab Apple Jelly

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Any type of jam can be used to sweeten the orange juice which acts like a sauce for the fruit. If the mixture gets too sweet, add a little lemon juice to brighten it up. If the jam is a firmer style like the crab apple jelly Alice uses, warm it up on the stove so that it easily dissolves into the orange juice. The pear and raspberry compote can be served as-is but also benefits from a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

2 to 3 tablespoons crab apple jelly
Juice of 1 orange
2 to 3 ripe pears
1 basket raspberries

Put the jelly into a small saucepan and gently warm to melt. Remove from the heat and squeeze in the juice of an orange. Whisk together. Peel and slice the pears, and put into a pretty bowl along with the raspberries. Pour the jelly sauce over the fruit and gently mix. Let soak 30 minutes. Chill and let macerate until ready to serve.

LEARN MORE

- To make crab apple jelly, follow the recipe on page 128 of *My Pantry*. You can also use another jelly or fresh fruit sauce or syrup in lieu of the crab apple jelly.

14 A MARKET FRESH DINNER / FINISH AND SERVE

"Now I'm preparing for the guests to come. I did the preparation already, and I'll show you how I set a table in the next chapter, but there is a last-minute burst of cooking—which of course you can also always do with your friends or family helping."

SUBCHAPTERS

Flavors From the Fire

Balance Your Meal With Salad

Be Conscious of Portions

Plate and Serve

CHAPTER REVIEW

Alice has planned her menu but she makes an impromptu decision to also grill the chanterelle mushrooms a friend brought to her the day of the dinner. Feel free to modify the menu as you see fit and grill an extra vegetable or two. Even if you don't serve it with dinner, you can use the cooked vegetables in meals throughout the week and it is an opportunity to practice cooking over the coals.

If you are able to cook over a fire, follow the recipe for Grilled Chicken, and if you will be cooking in cast iron on the stove, follow the recipe for Chicken Cooked Under a Brick. Whether cooking on the grill or on the stove, start the chicken skin side down and cook it longer on that side (about two-thirds of the total time) to develop a flavorful crispy skin. Finish the potatoes on the grill with the chicken, or in the pan after removing the cooked chicken. The potatoes do not need to be served piping hot but keep them on the fire long enough to brown and develop slightly crispy edges.

For Alice, the salad balances the plate in both texture and color. She uses a mandoline to slice fennel and radishes to add to the lettuces, and dresses everything with a vinaigrette just before serving.

To plate this meal for four, slice each breast in half lengthwise and place a half on each plate. Add a few of the potatoes and spoon the aïoli next to the potatoes. Arrange the salad on the plate and finish with chopped parsley, if you like. Notice that two chicken breasts are enough for four people and only account for a quarter of the plate. More vegetables means that the protein can be an equal element on the plate rather than the dominant one.

Alice serves a balanced plate full of vegetables and salad that does not leave the diner feeling overly full. Restaurant culture in the US has taught us that we aren't getting our money's worth if the portions aren't huge but both at Chez Panisse and in her home, Alice prefers to focus on balance and satisfaction.

The fruit compote prepared earlier is chilled and ready to serve. It is easy to make ahead and the flavors improve as it sits. For this very simple dessert, Alice uses whatever fruit is in season and sometimes a mix of fruits. A fragrant tisane is always a welcome compliment to the compote and a soothing end to the meal.

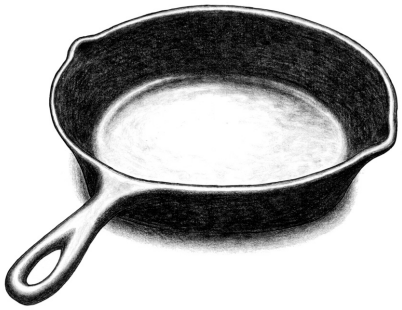
RECIPES

Grilled Chicken

ADAPTED FROM *The Art of Simple Food,* PAGE 348

First, if you haven't already, season the chicken breasts (boneless, skin on) liberally with salt, pepper, and thyme and drizzle with olive oil. If dinner is more than a few hours away, refrigerate the chicken and pull it out and hour before you are ready to cook so that it has time to come to room temperature.

Prepare a bed of coals and let them burn down until medium-hot (the coals should be covered with white ash). Clean the grate and set it 5 or 6 inches above the coals to heat. Place the chicken breasts on the hot grill, skin side down, and cook about 7 minutes, until the skin is brown and crispy. Turn and cook another 3 to 5 minutes. Depending on the fire this will take about 10 to 12 minutes total. Check to gauge doneness—when pushing the center of the meat with your tongs or fingers it should feel firm. You can always check the chicken breast by making a cut to peek inside and return it to the grill if more cooking is needed. Keep an eye out for flare-ups and over-browning. Move the chicken to a cooler place on the grill if it is cooking too quickly. Remove from the grill when done and let rest for 5 minutes before cutting and serving.



Chicken Cooked Under a Brick

ADAPTED FROM *The Art of Simple Food,* PAGE 346

This is the classic Italian dish known as *pollo al mattone.* Cooking chicken under a heavy weight (*mattone* means brick) results in an exceptionally crispy skin.

Season chicken breasts well with salt, pepper, and thyme, and drizzle with olive oil. Put a cast-iron skillet over medium heat. When hot, add a tablespoon of olive oil, then quickly and carefully placed the chicken breasts in the pan with the skin side down. Arrange the chicken so that all the skin is in contact with the skillet. Wrap another skillet of the same size with aluminum foil to use as a weight. Place the foil-wrapped skillet on top of the chicken. This will press all of the skin into contact with the hot skillet surface below and give it extra crispiness. Adjust the heat so that the chicken is sizzling at medium. The aim is to thoroughly brown and crisp the skin and render some of the fat without burning the skin or overcooking the meat. Lift the weight and check the skin after a few minutes to see how it's doing. If it's darkening very quickly, lower the heat a bit. If the skin is still pale, raise it a little. By the time the skin is well browned and crispy, about 10 to 12 minutes, the meat will be nearly cooked through. Remove the weight and carefully turn the chicken over; there will be a lot of rendered fat by this point, some of which you can pour or spoon off. Do not replace the weight on the skin side or it will lose its crispiness. Cook for a few minutes more to finish.

Crispy Potatoes

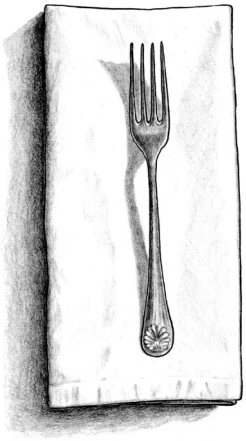
To finish the potatoes on the grill: Cut the parboiled fingerlings in half lengthwise. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt. Place flat side down on the hot grill to brown while the chicken rests.

To finish the potatoes on the stove: Cut the parboiled fingerlings in half lengthwise. After removing the cooked chicken from the pan to rest, add the potatoes, flat side down, to the hot pan and cook 5 minutes or so to brown.

LEARN MORE

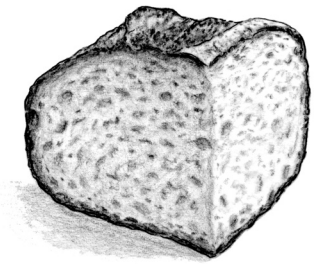
- For more recipes to make over the fire, read the complete chapter "Over the Coals" on pages 151–161 of *The Art of Simple Food.*
- Try cooking beans over a fire. You can reference the recipe on page 42 of *My Pantry.* Read the book that inspired the technique, *The Magic of Fire: Hearth Cooking: One Hundred Recipes for the Fireplace or Campfire* by William Rubel.

15 COMING BACK TO THE TABLE



"I think we really do want to gather. But it's so much easier when the food on the table is homemade and delicious."

SUBCHAPTERS



CHAPTER REVIEW

When Alice went to France for the first time, at age 19, she fell in love with the culture and food of France. French families shopped in their local markets every day, made meals out of whatever was ripe and delicious from nearby farms, and spent hours gathering together around the table, talking about politics and sharing stories from their days. For Alice, slowing down to enjoy the experience of food and the friendships that form around the table is an essential part of life.

Alice grew up in suburban New Jersey, and her upbringing was like many children's in the 1950s. What formed some of Alice's earliest food memories was the victory garden her parents had planted as part of President Roosevelt's war effort. Much of Alice's childhood was spent outdoors sampling fruits and vegetables from the victory garden. While Alice's mother believed in feeding her daughters healthy food and gathered her family around the table every evening for dinner, her mother wasn't a very good cook; she had been indoctrinated in the fast food culture of the time that championed frozen dinners, canned foods, and other so-called "modern" conveniences for housewives.

Although fast food culture has promoted the idea that people are too busy to come together around the table, Alice believes that we do want to gather and to form a connection with our food—how it was made and where it comes from—and with each other.

When Alice makes dinner for friends she sets the table in the afternoon so that it looks inviting when her guests arrive. She sets her table with a mix of dishes that have meaning to her—plates from Mexico, silverware and wine glasses from the flea market, and etched Chez Panisse anniversary glasses from different years. Dark, cotton napkins don't show the fingerprints of a guest's meal and feel absorbent and comforting. Alice cuts and sews retired Chez Panisse tablecloths down into napkins and dyes them indigo to hide stains. The combination of all of your choices begins to tell a story for your guests and should make them feel cared for.

Alice endeavors to keep the experience accessible, opting for simple wine glasses and only a fork and knife (rather than a formal silverware spread). It's better to put dishes to use than to hand them down to live on a shelf, unused, for generations. Alice likes to place the forks tine side down—a tradition in France that conveys respect—and encourages you to discover your own rituals for your table for friends.

COMING BACK TO THE TABLE

Keep a big pitcher of water on the table and choose music that is relaxing for mealtime—and then, if you like, adjust it for washing dishes or dancing in the kitchen. At Chez Panisse, Alice plays classical jazz at a background level to allow for conversation throughout dinner.

LEARN MORE

- In Alice's memoir, *Coming To My Senses: The Making of a Counterculture Cook,* read the chapter "*C'Est Si Bon!*" (pages 95–119) about her first trip to France and her awakening to French food culture.
- Explore the history and philosophy of the international Slow Food movement.

16 THE POWER OF FOOD / THE EDIBLE SCHOOLYARD

"Food touches every one of our senses, which are the pathways into to our minds…food is our shared language."

SUBCHAPTERS

The Edible Schoolyard Project

CHAPTER REVIEW

Over 23 years ago, Alice founded the Edible Schoolyard Project at Berkeley's Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School. There are more than one thousand students in grades six, seven, and eight, and more than two dozen languages are spoken on campus. Children come from every possible cultural and economic background, so food is their common language. The Edible Schoolyard Project has served as an incubator for a universal idea that Alice terms "edible education"—a hopeful and delicious way to counteract the industrialization of public schools and revitalize public education.

The Edible Schoolyard Project is an integration of a school garden and kitchen into the heart of the teaching mission. For the three years they are in school, students grow, harvest, and cook their own food in the garden and kitchen classrooms as part of their academic curriculum. In a history class about Neolithic times, for example, students might join their chef teacher and history teacher in hand-grinding heirloom grain berries in a stone mortar, and then make bread that they eat warm, right from the oven. In a science class, students learn about worm boxes and compost as they dig in the soil and tend to the raspberry patch; in a math class, students might measure the dimensions of a vegetable bed, or learn about fractions while baking. Through food, every subject comes alive, and students absorb their lessons effortlessly. Food is a lens through which you can educate the whole child. In the process, children come into a new relationship to food and learn to be stewards of the land.

Every class session, whether it's history or science or math, concludes with a plate of food around the table. The children sit down together to share a delicious seasonal meal, talk about what they've done, and learn basic etiquette, such as not eating until everyone has been served, or asking politely for food to be passed. Even the basic human value of civilized communication becomes an essential part of the journey.

All schools can support local sustainable farms too. Every student deserves a free, delicious, sustainable school lunch, and if public schools purchased their food from local organic farmers, it could change agriculture overnight. School lunch represents an enormous opportunity: Right in the middle of every child's school day lies time and energy set aside and devoted to food already. When children gather around the lunch table and enjoy wholesome, delicious food together, in an atmosphere of caring and beauty, they fall in love with its lessons and values.

The Edible Schoolyard Project now has an online network of over 5,500 like-minded kitchen and garden programs around the world. These programs show that no two Edible Schoolyard Projects can be alike—every place has its own climate, its own food traditions, its own crops and community. But these thousands of programs also prove the universality of an edible education. When children receive an edible education, they grow up feeling the soil with their own fingers, harvesting its bounty, and watching their own hands make the kind of beautiful, inexpensive food that can nourish the body and the spirit for their whole lives.

Principles of Edible Education

FOOD IS A POWERFUL TEACHER

Food can be an academic subject. A kitchen, cafeteria, and school garden should be integral to the academic mission of the school, so that ecology and gastronomy help bring alive every subject, from reading and writing to science and art. Food educates all of the senses.

THE CAFETERIA IS THE HEART OF THE SCHOOL

From preschool through high school, every child deserves a wholesome, delicious, sustainable, free school lunch, every day. Good food is a right, not a privilege. Learning to eat good food, seated together at the table, teaches human values; it builds community and brings children into a positive relationship with their health and the environment.

SCHOOLS SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

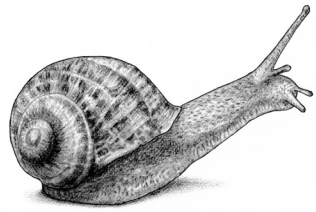
When school cafeterias buy seasonal, fresh food directly from local, sustainable farms and ranches—not only for reasons of health—it becomes a way of understanding our interdependency with nature and the world outside the school.

CHILDREN LEARN BY DOING

A hands-on education, in which the children themselves do the work in the vegetable beds and on the cutting boards, awakens their senses and opens their minds—both to their academic subjects and to the world around them.

BEAUTY IS THE LANGUAGE OF CARE

A beautifully prepared environment, where deliberate thought has gone into everything from the garden paths to the plates on the tables, communicates to children that we care about them.



ALICE'S EGG IN A SPOON

Many years ago, Alice's friend Angelo Garro of the Renaissance Forge in San Francisco made her a long spoon to use in her fireplace. Around the same time, another friend gave Alice a book about the magic of fire. In the book, she saw an egg being cooked on a spoon in a fireplace—so she put the spoon to use and began to practice cooking an egg in the fireplace with it. She lost many eggs during the learning process, but had a lot of fun figuring it out.

Cooking an egg in the fire requires you to build the fire to function like the broiler in your oven—heat has to come from the top as well as the bottom. Build the fire with some of the logs on the top grate and some on the bottom, so that heat will reach the egg from both directions. The logs will take about 40 minutes to cook down to be ready to cook the egg.

Alice's Egg in a Spoon

1 SERVING

1 egg
Olive oil to coat
Salt
Marash pepper
1 piece toast, grilled and rubbed with garlic, drizzled with olive oil

Crack the egg into a bowl without breaking the yolk to ensure no pieces of shell end up on the spoon. Season with salt and marash pepper (an aromatic, mild dried red chile from Turkey). Coat the spoon with olive oil to prevent the egg from sticking. Gently pour the cracked egg into the spoon and carefully lift the spoon into the fire. The whites will begin to puff up. If any ash falls onto the egg from the wood above just pull it off when you are done cooking. The egg is ready to come out of the fire when the top of the egg browns—it's a quick process. Pull the spoon out of the fire and quickly loosen the sides of the egg from the spoon. Slide the egg onto the toast and top with more marash pepper. Serve alongside a simple green salad.

BOOKS BY ALICE WATERS

Chez Panisse Vegetables, HarperCollins, 1996

Chez Panisse Fruit, HarperCollins, 2002

The Art of Simple Food, Clarkson Potter, 2007

In the Green Kitchen: Techniques to Learn by Heart, Clarkson Potter, 2010

40 Years of Chez Panisse, Clarkson Potter, 2011

The Art of Simple Food II, HarperCollins, 2013

Fanny in France: Travel Adventures of a Chef's Daughter, with Recipes, Viking, 2016

My Pantry: Homemade Ingredients That Make Simple Meals Your Own, Penguin Random House, 2015

Coming to My Senses: The Making of a Counterculture Cook, Penguin Random House, 2017